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A CENTURY OF PAINTERS

OF THE

ENGLISH SCHOOL.

A

CENTURY OF PAINTERS

OF THE

ENGLISH SCHOOL;

WITH

CRITICAL NOTICES OF THEIR WORKS,

AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE

PROGRESS OF ART IN ENGLAND.

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BY

RICHARD REDGRAVE, R.A.

(SURVEYOR OF HER MAJESTY'S PICTURES AND INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR ART),

AND

SAMUEL REDGRAVE.

"THERE ARE NOT SO MANY WRONG OPINIONS IN THE WORLD AS IS GENERALLY IMAGINED; FOR MOST PEOPLE HAVE NO OPINION AT ALL, BUT TAKE UP WITH THOSE OF OTHERS, OR WITH MERE HEARSAY AND ECHOES."—*Locke.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

The opinion is at last gaining ground that Art is no longer an alien on English soil; and the time appears to have arrived when some interest will be felt in a narrative of its progress among us. An artist may now without fear of presumption speak of "The English School," a school rich in fine works, whose painters are remarkable for the national character, as well as for the individual originality, of their genius.

Great progress was unquestionably made in the last generation towards a better appreciation of Art. Now, all make it at least a subject of conversation, many of real interest. A desire to see works of art, if not a taste for them, has been developed by the public collections in the British Museum, the National Gallery, and more recently, in the South Kensington Museum, added to the growing attractions of the exhibitions at the Royal Academy, the Water-Colour Societies, the Suffolk Street Gallery, and other institutions.

Meanwhile we have no connected narrative in which the growth and development of our school, and the peculiarities of the artists who have been its pride and its ornament, have been critically traced. While impressed with the difficulty of obtaining reliable information concerning many of our painters and their works, it has been our aim to supply this want by such means as were within our reach. Some artists enjoy a reputation quite unsupported by the works they have left behind them, others, scarcely known in their own day, have bequeathed to us works of great merit, which should have given a reputation, but have hardly secured to them a record or a name.

All the Continental schools and their artists have had their historians; everything connected with them has been narrated, lauded, and criticised, while of the progress of Art in England, and its truly national character, the story has been left untold. When entrusted with the selection and arrangement of the works of the English school in the International Exhibition of 1862, this neglect was made woefully apparent to us; of our artists, of their most renowned works, and their present possessors, there was but scant record. We had long felt a deep interest in the works of our early painters. It then became our duty, in search of them, to visit the chief collections in the country, and availing ourselves of the opportunity, we added largely to the notes and information we had before possessed; and with the view of confirming our first impressions, we have since the

commencement of this work, again seen many of the paintings which in the course of it we have critically noticed.

It has been the subject of remark that artists have rarely been writers upon their art; that the judgment and criticism eschewed by them, have been left to others devoid of technical knowledge; while the painter has been told that the pencil, not the pen, belongs to him, and that he will find the best employment for his time and thought at his easel. Of the truth of this, while devoting ourselves to this work we have been made fully sensible; yet in the attempt to speak justly of the painter's art, to give a due place to forgotten genius, and a knowledge of our profession, founded on right principles, the labour has not been unattended by some feelings of compensation.

Our object has been to write a connected history of the Art of Painting, and of the institutions founded for its promotion, in the last and present century, during which time English Art had its true birth, and has progressed to a healthy vigour. We have not attempted to write biographies of our artists, but to give such facts relating to those who were most distinguished, as intimately connect them with their works, speaking, however, exceptionally more at large of others of whom little is known, yet in all cases confining ourselves to those who have finished their labours and have passed from us.

Our aim throughout has been to cultivate a catholic love for Art, without prepossession or prejudice; to see

the merits of a great work before its defects, and never without a fair recognition of the difficulties the artist has had to overcome. By this spirit we have, we trust, always been guided.

In the selection of a painter's works for special criticism, while we have chosen those which are esteemed the most important, we have had a view also to those which are most accessible to the public, so as to afford an opportunity for examining the grounds of the opinions we have expressed.

KENSINGTON, *September*, 1865.

A CENTURY OF PAINTERS.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

Absence of any Record of the Early English Artists—Walpole's Work on Art—Opinions of English Art by French Artists and German Critics—A British Gallery, a National Want—Hogarth's deprecatory Opinions of his Countrymen—State of Art Instruction—Value of Art to Manufacture—Sentiments expressed by Mr. Pitt and by Locke—Little Knowledge of the Works of our Early Painters—Destruction and Damage by Repairers and Cleaners—Alteration and Re-christening of Portraits—Fictitious Ancestors—Manufacture of Drawings by the Old Masters—Hogarth's "Black Masters"—Spurious Copies—Langford's Auctions—Loss of Paintings by Fire, from Fanaticism and Neglect—Multiplication by duplicate Copies and Replicas.

In a short account of the most eminent painters, ancient and modern, by Richard Graham, which was appended to the second edition of Du Fresnoy's *Art of Painting*, published in 1716, the writer says, "I am ashamed to acknowledge how difficult a matter I have found it to get but the least information touching some of those ingenious men of my own country, whose works have been a credit and a reputation to it." Yet this difficulty mainly refers to the notices of only four English artists who are included in Graham's work—Samuel Cooper,

Dobson, Greenhill, and Riley. Later, Horace Walpole remarks, in his *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (1762), that this country had not then a single volume to show on the works of its painters; and he adds, "In truth it has very rarely given birth to a genius in that profession; Flanders and Holland have sent us the greatest men that we can boast." He even apologizes for the title of his work. He had evidently designed to write the lives of the English painters, for which he thought that Vertue's collections would furnish the materials; but he found that if no one had gathered the fruits, the crop was small and the land barren. True as this was when Walpole wrote, the men then lived and were rising into fame whose works will always remain among the glories of the English painter's art. Hogarth, Wilson, Gainsborough, Reynolds, and Copley then upheld the high character of our art, and have left its records in their works, and its reputation to a race of painters by whom it has been well sustained; yet their works and their names remain at the end of another century without a history; and our English school is still scarcely recognized at home, much less on the Continent.

When a collection of English pictures was sent in 1855 to the International Exhibition in Paris, our art was almost unknown there; and endeavours to obtain suitable space for its proper display were received with impatience—for it clearly was not deemed of much importance where the English pictures were hung. When, however, the cases were opened, curiosity prompted a glance at some of the pictures; then surprise at their merits, which were generously acknowledged, attracted

more admirers than were convenient to those charged with the arrangement; and before this task was completed, the French artists admitted to their English brethren, that only two schools then existed in Europe —"ours and yours." "Other schools," they said, "are founded on ours; yours is an original school"—an opinion which, if only intended as a compliment, is not the less a fact and a truth. The neglect of our English school at home, the disbelief in our own artists, the carping criticism with which their works have been assailed, were the causes of this. We have brought together in our National Gallery, of which we may well be proud, fine examples of the great works of the Continental schools; and we possess by gift (with a few occasional purchases) many works of our own painters; but we want a collection selected to represent the school. The most choice works of the British artists should be purchased by the public for a *British Gallery*, which should include a good example by every artist of acknowledged eminence. Then, and not till then, can either our own citizens or their foreign visitors do full justice to the school of art, so purely national and characteristic, which has grown up in England since Walpole wrote.

Our own countrymen have not even thought it worth while to translate what Franz Kügler, a distinguished German critic, has said of us in his *Handbook of Painting*. Of this work, Sir Charles Eastlake ably edited, in two volumes, the Italian schools, and Sir Edmund Head undertook to edit the remainder. In his editorial preface to Volume I., comprising the German, Flemish, and Dutch schools, Sir Edmund proposes that the Spanish, French, and English schools should form another

volume; but in the same year (1854) he published the second volume, including the French and Spanish schools only. In his first volume Sir Edmund apologizes for Kügler's sketch of the history of the English school as "rather too slight for the readers of this country, though perhaps sufficient for the German public, when considered in relation to the whole subject." Now Kügler, in his comprehensive work, only occupies thirteen pages with the English school; and his translator neither thinks it necessary to translate it, nor to explain why, in the face of his expressed intention, he has omitted it. Another German critic, Dr. Ernst Guhl, who wrote on historical painting in 1848, and whose work finds a voucher in Kügler's book, dismisses the English history painters in a parenthesis, distinguishing as of this class, "Eastlake, Maclise, Wilkie, Chisholm, Cattermole, Hayter, Lestie (? Leslie), Fisk," with an "&c."

The same feeling with regard to our art is pictorially represented in the corridor of the great gallery at Munich, built by Baron von Klenze, where each of the schools of Europe, nineteen in number, is allegorically described. We cannot mistake our own, for we find over it the word "London," with the City arms and dagger. Though surely not flattering, it is more easy to describe than to comprehend. On the left of the design a naked figure representing Painting, with his palette thrown aside, lies fast asleep; above, a choir of angels, trying, we suppose, to arouse him. On the right, a satyr with a skin of wine, Cupid and a king, and, hovering over them, Fame, Poetry, and Hymen. We must leave the riddle to our readers. The design must either have pleased the artist,

or he was at his wits' end, for we find it again used for the Bolognese school, and must be flattered with the association.

The truth seems to be, that the English painters have, for the better part of a century, struggled against an old prejudice, not yet wholly eradicated, that art is neither congenial to our soil nor our nature, and cannot flourish among us. Hogarth, with all his shrewd intelligence, and not a little prejudice, held this opinion. Hear how strangely he expressed himself in his letter, supposed to have been addressed to Lord Bute, against the establishment of an Art Academy under royal patronage:—

"We cannot vie with these Italian and Gothic theatres of art, and to enter into competition with them is ridiculous; we are a commercial people, and can purchase their curiosities ready made, as in fact we do, and therefore prevent them thriving in our native clime. . . . In Holland selfishness is the ruling passion; in England vanity is united with it. Portrait-painting therefore ever has and ever will succeed better in this country than in any other; the demand will be as constant as new faces arise; and with this we must be contented, for it will be vain to attempt to force what can never be accomplished, or at least by such institutions as Royal Academies on the system now in agitation. . . . . For historical pictures there never can be a demand; our churches reject them; the nobility prefer foreign productions, and the generality of our apartments are too small to contain them. A certain number of portrait-painters, if they can get patronized by people of rank, may find employment, but the majority even of these must either shift how they

can amongst their acquaintance, or live by travelling from town to town like gipsies."

It would be useless in the present day to combat the assertion that natural and political impediments opposed the success of Art in our country. Who would now maintain the incompatibility of Art and Commerce, when the one has proved the handmaid to the other? or, that the deficiency of taste shown by our cold manners and ungraceful costume must freeze Art, when the charming works of Gainsborough, Reynolds, Lawrence, and a host of others witness that no impediments could chill their genius? Who would say that the religion of England is opposed to Art, which it has inspired, and will before long place in its temples? or, that our climate is unfavourable, when we see the works of the great school of landscape painters founded upon its cloudy gleams of sun and shade, its glorious misty effects of sunrise and sunset, its spring freshness, and mellowed autumn richness? Hogarth's opinion nevertheless sounds very English, and could not have been without response when it was written; nor would it now, though its fallacy has been proved in practice. Hogarth in the same paper also expresses himself warmly respecting the spread of teaching and the increase of artists under the training of an Academy; and turning upon the Society of Arts, then recently established, he says: "Of the immense improvement that is to take place in our manufactures, from boys of almost every profession being taught to draw, I form no very sanguine expectations." . . . . "As measuring is but measuring, I do not think that a tailor would make a suit of clothes fit better for having been employed twice seven years in

taking the dimensions of all the bits of antiquity that remain in Greece. How absurd it would be to see periwig-makers' and shoemakers' boys learning the art of drawing, that they might give grace to a peruke or a slipper."

We are certainly not less a commercial people than when Hogarth wrote, but we have learnt since his day the intimate connection which exists between Art and Manufacture; and the State has felt it a duty to provide instruction in drawing, even in the extreme case of tailors' and shoemakers' apprentices, no doubt to their improvement and profit, if they will avail themselves of it. Though more directly useful to mechanics, workers in wood and metal, and those employed in the decoration of porcelain, pottery, glass, paper, and our great staples in cotton, silk, and wool, good taste and appropriate ornamentation add largely to the value of all materials, and increase the markets in which they find a profitable sale.

In Art-teaching, though its object may be definite, its limits must in their result be without bounds. The student who aims to become a designer for our cottons or porcelains, may be led by the development of his talents to the highest paths in Art; and he who begins his career dreaming of Raphael or Titian, but is never able to approach these great examples, need not despair and starve. He has a lower and a useful sphere open to him. He may find profitable employment as a portrait painter, though in the second rank, or as a copyist or a teacher; as a draftsman and designer, his attainments may be of infinite value in connecting Art with Manufacture, the alliance between which is as close as

between Art and Science, and as essential in perfecting the works of our artisans. In the most flourishing times of Italian Art, the greatest artists lent their talents to Manufacture; the most rare jewels, the most precious metals, the richest silks, have been trebled in value by the artist's skill. The meanest articles of our daily use may, by the same skill, not only be turned to greater profit, but be made more conducive to our enjoyment and improvement.

But we would not limit our view to the teaching of apprentices and mechanics. All have an interest in Art. It gives an increased intelligence, a new pleasure, a truer love of Nature—the purest enjoyment we know. How feelingly this is described by our great statesman, Mr. Pitt, when sitting for his portrait to Owen:—"I exceedingly regret that I am entirely ignorant of the fine arts; and had I any control over the system of education of the patrician youth, I should take care that they cultivated the study of drawing; not only as one of the intelligent and generally useful arts, but as it would open to the mind, in every change of place, a new and most extensive source of delight. I have formed this opinion upon the rational pleasure, the happy resource, which I have observed has been derived by those amongst my friends who have a taste for the pursuits of Art, in their hours of relaxation from public business, and the solace which it has continued to be to many enlightened men when they have entirely retired from public affairs. Such men are most to be envied, for to them their latter years are the happiest of their lives." Locke, in his *Thoughts Concerning Education*, also inculcated an early attention to drawing, but with more

utilitarian views than the statesman who lamented the happy quiet solace of Art which he could never enjoy. Locke says of the young student:—"When he can write well and quick, I think it may be convenient not only to continue the exercise of his hand in writing, but also to improve the use of it further in drawing, a thing very useful to gentlemen on several occasions, but especially if he travel, as that which helps a man often to express in a few lines well put together what a whole sheet of paper in writing would not be able to represent and make intelligible. How many buildings may a man see, how many machines and habits meet with, the ideas whereof would be easily retained and communicated by a little skill in drawing, which being committed to words, are in danger of being lost, or at best but ill retained in the most exact descriptions."

Of the art of the painter, the sculptor, the architect, and the ornamental designer, as practised in this country, a history or even a record has to this time remained unwritten—a history which should trace the circumstances of their birth and struggling growth, of their nationality, of their moral and social value, and of their influence in the improvement and extension of the manufactures of our country. This blank we have attempted to supply in the following pages, so far as relates to painting treated as an art exclusively. Whatever may have been the condition of English Art prior to the commencement of the sixteenth century, its historical records are slight; they are confined to such particulars as may be found in the accounts of the Crown, the household expenses of the nobility, and the chapter records of our cathedrals, and frequently relate to the

magnificent tombs, shrines, and chapels which in those times were erected to perpetuate the memory of the great. Now and then an English name, either as painter, sculptor, or architect, appears, but the majority so employed were foreigners, brought here to execute some particular work, and occasionally induced to prolong their stay.

Very few pictures of any kind painted prior to the reign of Henry VII. are now in existence in this country. The few which can be identified, are mostly portraits, and have been preserved in the royal palaces, the mansions of the nobility, and in our colleges and corporate halls; and these relics have, unhappily, been so restored and renovated, that very little of the original work can now be distinguished. There would, indeed, seem to have been a time, when it was deemed a part of domestic economy to clean the pictures with the other furniture, and they had periodically their share of polishing with the wainscot, when peripatetic renovators went from hall to hall, and from house to house, whitewashing and polishing. Such cleaners scrubbed off and laid on paint without the smallest responsibility. They made the pictures shine with new varnish, and patched and re-gilded the frames. By these authorities portraits were affiliated anew, both as to the painter and the subject of his work —much, perhaps, to the satisfaction of the owner, who was gratified by a more sounding title to his picture; but greatly to the confusion of the Art-critic and the antiquary, now that such matters are made the subject of exact research.

After these scrubbers and cleaners, naturally came the repairers and restorers. The portrait of Richard II.

in Westminster Abbey, which in its original state would have been of very curious interest, is said by *Dallaway* "to have been most injudiciously restored, or in fact painted over again about a century ago."—(Notes to Walpole.) But the mischief did not end here, for an attempt has been since made by another cleaning to restore the original state, of which, if anything remains, it must be a miracle. Among the well-known memoranda by *R. Symonds* is this relating to the fine collection purchased of the Duke of Mantua by Charles I.:— "When the King's pictures came from Mantua, quicksilver was got in amongst them, and made them all black. Mr. Hieronymus Lalliere (brother of Nicholas) told me that to cleanse them, first he tried fasting-spittle, then he mixt it with warm milk, and those would not do; and at last he cleaned them with aqua-vitæ alone, and that took off all the spots, and he says, 'twill take off the varnish." *Sanderson*, in his *Graphice*, tells of this old master of the cleaning craft, "as the first who passed off copies for originals, by tempering his colours with soot, and then by rolling them up, he made them crackle and contract an air of antiquity." Laniere's inventions have survived to the present day.

As pictures aged and lost the freshness of their youthful complexions, this very defect came to be considered a beauty; the brown hue of successive coats of varnish was admired as an excellence: "A good picture," said Sir George Beaumont, "like a good fiddle, should be brown." If a picture came from abroad in a fine fresh state of preservation, the dealers were too wise to let it be seen until its pure tints were subdued to the established hue. Connoisseurs believed that pictures,

like coins, obtained a patina from age, which mellowed their tone, and made them more valuable than in the state they left the painter's easel. Instances of the mal-treatment of pictures are rife enough. A painter named *Brompton*, who practised in the latter half of the eighteenth century, a professed picture cleaner, lives only in the bad repute of the mischief he has done. Among his other crimes, he is alleged to have had under his reckless hand, Vandyke's great picture of the Pembroke family at Wilton. Rubens' celebrated ceiling painting in the banqueting-house at Whitehall, was somewhat out of ready reach; it has not, however, escaped. Only sixty years after its completion, in the reign of James II., Parry Walton, a painter of still-life, then keeper of the King's pictures, was employed to repair it, and was paid 212*l.* for his work. Then Giovanni Cipriani received 1,000*l.* for further retouchings; after him it was "refreshed" by John F. Rigaud, R.A., and the well-known William Kent is also named as having had a share in these sad doings. In his journal, September, 1854, B. R. Haydon speaks like a painter of the cruelties suffered by a picture under such hands. "They may talk as they please of the sufferings of humanity, but there is nothing so excites my sympathy as the helpless sufferings of a fine old oil picture of a great genius: —Unable to speak or remonstrate, touching all hearts by its dumb beauty, appealing to all sympathies by its silent splendour, laid on its back in spite of its lustrous and pathetic looks, taken out of its frame, stripped of its splendid encasement, fixed to its rack to be scraped, skinned, burnt, and then varnished, in mockery of its tortures, its lost purity, its beautiful harmony, and hung

up again, castrated and unmanned, for puny Envy to chuckle over; whilst the shade of the mighty dead is allowed to visit and rest about his former glory, as a pang for sins not yet atoned for."

With such doings, Hogarth had no sympathy. He called the smoked, dark, bad copies of frequently bad originals, and the skinned and repainted realities which were sold in his day, "the works of the black masters." Nicholls tells of the incredible numbers of such which were annually sold in Langford's well-known auctions, obscured by dirt, or scumbled down by asphaltum to the taste of the so-called connoisseur; and Hogarth himself in a *Defence of Sir James Thornhill's Works*, which on sufficient authority is attributed to his son-in-law, and is worthy of him, describes how spurious works of this class were palmed upon our countrymen by foreign picture jobbers.

"If a man, naturally a judge of painting, not bigoted to these empirics, should cast his eye on one of their sham virtuoso-pieces, he would be very apt to say—'Mr. Bubbleman, that grand Venus, as you are pleased to call it, has not beauty enough for the character of an English cook-maid;' upon which the quack answers, with a confident air—'O Lord, sir! I find you are no connoisseur. That picture, I assure you, is in Alesso Baldovinetto's second and best manner, boldly painted and truly sublime; the contour gracious, the hair of the head in the Greek taste, and a most divine idea it is.' Then spitting on an obscure place, and rubbing it with a dirty handkerchief, takes a skip to the other end of the room, and screams out in raptures—'There is an amazing touch! A man should have this picture a twelvemonth

in his collection, before he can discover half its beauties The gentleman, though naturally a judge of what is beautiful, though ashamed to be out of fashion by judging for himself, with this cant is struck dumb, gives a vast sum for the picture, very modestly confesses he is indeed quite ignorant of painting, and bestows a frame worth 50*l.* on a frightful thing, without the hard name not worth as many farthings."

Works of art are, however, liable to other dangers and mischances; numerous copies have been made of pictures, renowned either for the fame of their painter or their subject, for the collateral branches of families; or, as was frequently the case, as presents from the sovereign. Charles I. employed John Van Belcamp exclusively, and Joachim Sandrart very largely, in copying his pictures for such purposes, and the same practice has prevailed to our own day. These copies in time are exalted into originals, while many of the originals themselves have been altered in size, enlarged or cut down at the will of the possessor to form companions to other pictures, to fill panels, or to fit spaces. In great collections it is not uncommon to find pictures which were painted horizontal or landscape-way added to largely at the top and bottom and made upright, whole lengths cut down into half-lengths, heads furnished with drapery became half-lengths, and this process has been repeated or reversed at intervals, until all trace of the original is absolutely lost. Walpole says of a picture still at Windsor, "In the State bed-chamber is a portrait of Edward VI. It was originally a half-length, but has been very badly converted into a whole figure, since the time of Holbein."—(*Anecdotes of Painting*).

Again as families rose to wealth and distinction, the herald was set to work to furnish them with coats-of-arms, and the painter with respectable forefathers. Many an ancient portrait by a curtailment of the ruff, or an extra curl of the wig, has changed its date from the first to the second James, and has figured in quite a new family relation. Royal personages, poets, authors, men of science or eminent in the church, the law, or in arms, were required for the decoration of halls and libraries, and the modern theory of supply and demand did not lack fulfilment. The brainless nonentities transformed into Miltons and Shakspeares may be reckoned by dozens. These tricks had not escaped the notice of Walpole, who, while expressing his regret that painters should omit to write on their portraits their own and their sitters' names, says "that the poorest performers have it in their power to add so much merit to their works as can be conferred by identifying the subjects, which would be a little reparation to the curious world, though some families should miss imaginary ancestors." (*Anecdotes of Painting*). Nor have such schemes fallen into disuse; an American agent recently in London explained his business to be to "collect ancestors," and that he had been very successful. He said he had picked up many good portraits; and that with proper attention to costume and age, and some little heraldic additions, he had matched suitable husbands and wives for two or three generations, and had exported several very well-assorted families, which being provided with full credentials, were most filially adopted, and that he was continuing his highly remunerative researches. This is no fiction.

Nor have these strange mutations been confined to the works of the portrait-painters alone. Captain Baillie, reputed as an etcher and amateur, purchased for 70*l.* Cuyp's fine "View of Dort," and brought it to this country. It is known to have left the clever captain's hands as two separate pictures called "Morning" and "Evening," which were afterwards purchased for 2,200*l.*, and mechanically reunited—so this great work may be cited as one genuine specimen of restoration. Another instance is, however, pertinent, having just been under the eyes of all in the International Exhibition. Crome's picture of Mousehold Heath fell into the hands of a Jew, who, by the same process of cutting in half, converted it into two upright landscapes, which, in the same manner, have fortunately been brought together again, yet not without, it is said, some loss of part of the subject.

Then, again, the fair fame of painters and the reputation of their works are undermined by frauds, and great profits are made by unscrupulous devices. *Smith*, who was quite alive to such black arts, after complaining that Samuel Ireland raked up many wretched things which no collectors would admit into their folios as the works of Hogarth, adds, "I am also credibly informed that there is, even at this moment, an artist who finds it rather a successful occupation to make spirited drawings from Hogarth's prints, which he most ingeniously deviates from by the omission of some figure or other object, or insertion of an additional one, in order to give his drawing the appearance of a first thought upon which Hogarth is supposed to have made some alteration in his plate as an improvement. These drawings are discoloured, put into old black frames, and then, after passing them

through several hands, are finally sold, accompanied with a very long story, to those over-cunning collectors destitute of sufficient knowledge to enable them to detect the forgery."—(*Life of Nollekins.*)

We add two more well-told stories of the craft, from the same work. "John Barnard, Esq., nicknamed Jacky Barnard, who was fond of showing his collection of Italian drawings, expressed surprise that Mr. Nollekins did not pay sufficient attention to them. 'Yes, I do,' replied he; 'but I saw many of them at Jenkins's at Rome, while the man was making them for my friend Crone, the artist, one of your agents.'" Perhaps it would be difficult to name a more fertile field from which successful fraud has reaped its large ill-gotten gains than these "drawings by the old masters." The other story is equally pertinent. "Nollekins was addressed by a young man: 'Well, Mr. Nollekins, how do you do? You don't know me; but you recollect my grandfather, Arthur Pond.' 'Oh, yes, very well; he used to christen old drawings for Hudson; ay, I have often seen him when I was a boy.'" We will only add to these experiences, which might be indefinitely extended, the opinion expressed in an Art-publication of received authority in its day. "Such flagrant impositions were practised half a century ago by the picture-craft upon English connoisseurs as would hardly now be credited: monster Parmegianos, horrific Sebastian del Piombos, hideous Domenichinos, appalling Rubenses, spectre Guidos, assassin-like Caravaggios, and dismal Rembrandts were knocked down at five hundred guineas a head."—(*Arnold's Magazine*, 1831.)

Even when a picture comes direct from the studio of

the artist, is it always certainly the work of his own hand? How often are pictures painted in duplicate, triplicate, or in larger quantities for which names have not yet become common in our language. It is told of the court painter to George III. on his accession, that, having painted a popular likeness of that monarch head-size, he received such continuous commissions for repetitions of it, that his pupils and assistants were constantly employed on *stock*, and that above one hundred and fifty repetitions were made and found purchasers. In the same manner Turnerelli is stated to have made no less than eighty duplicates in marble of a bust of the king which he finished in 1810. The visitor to a few collections of pictures could hardly fail to be startled by seeing again and again the same work, though adapted in finish or size to the means of different purchasers, and though it might be invidious to name artists who repeat their works as often as they receive commissions for them, yet the fact is sufficiently patent. Such pictures, it is well known, are too often "forwarded" by inferior artists, and finished with only a few touches from the painter's hand—to affiliate the unlawful babes. This is, however, felt by conscientious men to be, at the least, sharp practice, which they would be glad, for the sake of their profession, should be placed under better defined regulations by a Copyright Act.

We add a recent instance of another kind. When it seemed probable that Etty's laborious life was drawing to its close, his works were purchased with avidity, particularly by dealers. Some dozens of his studies from the life had been lined or laid down on panels, and various purchasers' names, mostly dealers, were chalked

upon them as they lay in his then deserted studio in London. He was, poor man, sick at York, and died there shortly after; but when the works we have mentioned—mere Academy studies—came forth, they were fitted with backgrounds and dressed up pictorially for the market, certainly not however by the hand of the master. Again, when Mr. Doo, R.A., wished to engrave one of Etty's large historic pictures which had been recently purchased by the Scottish Academy, the members, reluctant to lend their newly-acquired treasure, suggested that the engraving should be made from a copy; and for this purpose they selected the work of a talented young painter in Edinburgh. This reduced copy, which was touched upon by Etty, was afterwards sold for seven hundred guineas as the original sketch for the picture by Etty, the price originally paid for it as a copy being twenty guineas. Several modern artists have had a bad repute as the skilful copyists of one particular master. Vandevelde, Wouvermans, Watteau, have each had such disciples, and these men's works have been the known means of fraud. Yet let it not for one moment be supposed that any artist could have any hand in such doings, and maintain his position among the respectable men of his profession. We extract, however, the following pertinent instance from a *Catalogue Raisonné* of the Exhibition of the Old Masters at the British Institution in 1815. The catalogue was published anonymously, but was well known to have been written by R. R. Reinagle, R.A. :—

"Landscape—Nicolo Poussin—Sir W. W. Wynne, Bart. And you call this a Poussin, Sir Watkin? Believe us, Sir Watkin, from our own direct know-

ledge, and without any malice, but merely to speak of this thing as of *our own making*, it is a most notable liar, the owner of no one good quality worthy your worship's entertainment."

With such facts before us, can it be any wonder that Art in this country, early Art especially, is in such a state of doubt and uncertainty? When we find practices such as we have described, commencing from the earliest periods and continued down to the present day, can we be surprised that those artists and judges whose opinions are the most esteemed are the least dogmatic—rather the most reserved in their judgments—and that questions of paternity in Art are as difficult as in law? Who shall calculate the destruction and damage which works of art have suffered, or the number of wretched imitations for which the admiration of posterity has been demanded? But paintings have other enemies; they are especially of that kind of riches "which moth and rust do corrupt." They have in great mansions been stowed away in roofs and cellars, and suffered to perish uncared-for and unseen. They have followed the fortunes of great families, and when they have decayed have, with them, been dispersed, lost, and neglected. More than any other, such treasures are liable to damage by fire, and their loss by this element has been proportionally great. The fire of London did an amount of damage to works of Art which has never been estimated, though we find many individual instances of it; for then the mansions of the noble and wealthy were in its midst, not, as now, removed to the suburbs. Again, the number of the country-seats of old English families, filled with the treasures of Art which have been destroyed by fire, either wholly or

partially, is almost incredible; and particularly in later years, when attempts were made to warm by modern inventions those spacious mediæval structures. Works of art, in times of war and riot, have been subject to wilful destruction, and also from the morbid feelings of individual possessors. We have an instance of fanatic destruction in the orders of Parliament in 1645, for the disposal of King Charles's collections:—

"That all such pictures and statues there (York House) as are without any superstition, shall be forthwith sold, for the benefit of Ireland and the north.

"That all such pictures there as have the representation of the second person of the Trinity upon them shall be forthwith burnt.

"That all such pictures there as have the representation of the Virgin Mary upon them shall be forthwith burnt."

We have reason to rejoice that these Gothic orders were not strictly carried out. So soon as Cromwell attained sufficient authority he took measures to preserve the royal collections, not only from parliamentary violence, but also from private rapacity. He saved many fine works, and he even detained some which had been actually sold by the orders of those whose usurped authority temporarily preceded the establishment of his own.

Walpole, with his friend Vertue, must have rescued many a work of art from most strange associations, and we cannot avoid quoting his picturesquely expressed authority how "Portraits that cost twenty, thirty, sixty guineas, and that proudly take posession of the drawing-room, give way in the next generation to those of the

new-married couple, when they are slightly mentioned as my father's and my mother's pictures. When they become my grandfather's and my grandmother's, they mount to the two pair of stairs; and then, unless despatched to the mansion-house in the country, or crowded into the housekeeper's room, they perish among the lumber of garrets or flutter into rags before a broker's shop in Seven Dials. Such already has been the fate of some of those deathless beauties of whom Pope promised his friend that they should

"Bloom in his colours for a thousand years."

This sad tale, too, is wittily confirmed by Reynolds, who, when his sister remarked that she had heard so much of the works of Jervis, to whom the poet refers, and had seen so little of them, only said, "My dear, you will find they are all removed to the attic."

As a set-off to the narrative of such destruction, it is pleasant to tell that at the end of the last century a large collection of the works of the great miniature-painters, Isaac and Peter Oliver, was discovered in an old mansion in Wales, which belonged to a descendant of their family. This valuable treasure consisted of the portraits of Sir Kenelm Digby and his family. The latest were dated in 1633. They were enclosed in ivory and ebony cases, and the whole collection locked up in a wainscot box, where they had lain in safety, and were as fresh as when first painted. Walpole was so fortunate as to secure these rare works, he says, "at a great price." They were dispersed on the sale of the Strawberry Hill collection.

Having said so much upon the injuries to which paintings are subjected, it will not be irrelevant in a

future chapter to make some suggestions which experience has shown to be essential for their proper preservation; to point out the different kinds of damage to which they are most liable, and the precautions proper for their prevention; to show the conditions under which the durability of such frail treasures will be best secured; the decay inherent in many works, from their manner of painting originally, and the materials then employed; and to describe the circumstances under which alone restoration may be practicable or should be attempted, and in what way it may be applied.

CHAPTER I.

The Painters who first practised Art in England, not exclusively Foreigners—Influence of Holbein—Excellence of the English Miniature Painters—Encouragement of Art by Charles I.—Rubens and Vandyke—The Native Artists who followed them—Decline and Debasement of Art under Lely and Kneller—Verrio's Decorations described—The Historical Portrait Style—Art run mad in Allegory—Native Portrait Painters in George I. and George II.'s Reign.

WHILE works of art in England have suffered so greatly from neglect, ignorance, and fanaticism, added to accidental damage and natural decay, the names of our countrymen, to whom many of these works must be assigned, perished with them. Of the early painters we know little; as illuminators, they introduced into their works delicate imitations of the human figure, animals, flowers, and foliage; as decorators, under the names of "steyners" or painters, they painted and gilded the carver's wooden and stone images, and the devices of heraldry; and at a later period, probably, improved their imitations of the human face, till their representations were recognized by the name of "portraits on board." Of their works under the unassuming title of glaziers, there remain some well-authenticated painted windows of no mean art, though they may have been executed from the designs of foreigners. Sometimes the arts of the painter, sculptor, or "marbler," as he was then called,

and architect were combined, as was the case with the great artists of the same period in Italy. But, as we have said, little remains of the works of the great decorators of this period to enable us to form a judgment of their merits. Of the painter's share, all has perished or been defaced.

Walpole, possessing the materials so carefully collected by Vertue, has given us the best connected account of the foreigners who, in the practice of their art here, became the teachers of our own artists. In the reign of Henry VII., Mabuse, a native of Hainault, a painter of great merit, and the contemporary of Albert Durer, is reputed to have practised in this country, and to have painted the portraits of Henry and his children. If he came here, he did not receive much encouragement; and as his stay could only have been short, his influence upon native Art must have been slight. It is also more than doubtful if the three small portraits by Mabuse at Hampton Court are not erroneously named by Vertue Henry VII.'s Children. Henry VIII. came to the throne with an overflowing treasury. He was fond of magnificence, and, in rivalry with the sovereigns of France and Spain, he spent the wealth amassed by his father in liberally encouraging painters, architects, goldsmiths, and all who could foster his love of pompous display. He invited to England Raphael, Primaticcio, and Titian, and though these great men were not tempted by his munificence, several Italians, some of them pupils of Raphael, settled here and were employed by Henry, who was fortunate also in retaining Holbein, who had been induced to visit England by Sir Thomas More. Holbein's great talent as a colourist and a

draughtsman, his originality, and the number and variety of his works during a long residence at the court, had an immediate and lasting effect upon the Art of our country. We find, however, as is usually the case, where one man stands so incomparably above his compeers and successors, that they become his imitators and followers only, and that their works, if they approach his in excellence, are frequently attributed to him, and their names lost to posterity in the shadow of his. We next hear of Sir Antonio More, or Moro, who came to England with Philip II., and left with him on the death of Queen Mary. He painted a number of fine portraits, many of which, well authenticated, remain in this country, and several historic pieces. In Queen Elizabeth's reign, Lucas de Heere, a Fleming, was the court painter; and after a short list of foreigners, among whom Zucchero stands prominent, we arrive at the name of *Nicholas Hilliard* (B. 1547, D. 1619), the first Englishman who attained a contemporary distinction which has survived to our own day. He was celebrated for his miniatures, "limnings in little," an art which would naturally grow out of the monkish skill in missal painting. His works are preserved and greatly prized by collectors. Dr. Donne said of them,—

> "An hand or eye
> By Hilliard drawn, is worth a historye
> By a worse painter made."

He was followed in his art by another countryman, *Isaac Oliver* (B. 1556, D. 1617), who, if not his pupil, owed much to his friendly instruction, and surpassed him in the power and excellence of his works. His miniatures, and some drawings by him which remain,

attest his skill, and are valued at high prices. Some of his works have been engraved.

Elizabeth's successor, James I., was no lover of Art, yet three eminent portrait-painters who came to England in his reign found employment, and their labours decorate the mansions of our old families, and perpetuate the features of many distinguished persons, in works which give equal delight to the artist, the historian, and the antiquary. These men, to whom we owe such cherished memories, were Paul Vansomer, a Fleming, who excelled in accuracy and in the pictorial treatment of his backgrounds; Cornelius Jansen, of Amsterdam, distinguished by the careful finish and calm truth of his portraiture; and Daniel Mytens, from the Hague, a good colourist, and happy in his landscape backgrounds. They also had their imitators, and their influence is apparent in the growing taste for Art, and the nascent powers of the native artists who followed them. In this and the following reign, *Peter Oliver* (B. 1601, D. 1660), the son of Isaac, maintained the succession of native artists, and practised miniature painting with great talent and success. Fine examples of his numerous works exist, and, when in the market, are only obtained at very costly prices. Contemporary with him was *John Hoskins* (D. 1664), also a miniature painter, an artist of great merit and highly esteemed. But for the unhappy political events of the reign of Charles I., it is impossible to predict to how high a state the Arts might have attained under his judicious patronage. Writers on Art all concur in the opinion that he was singularly gifted in his knowledge and love of the fine arts—love given purely for their own sake, apart from the renown such

possessions confer. Walpole, in his *Anecdotes of Painting*, says:—"The accession of this prince was the first era of real taste in England. As his temper was not profuse, the money he expended on his collections, and the rewards he bestowed on men of true genius, are proofs of his judgment. He knew how and when to bestow." Lilly, in his *Life and Death of Charles I.*, among his many fine qualities, mentions, "that in painting he had so excellent a fancy, that he would supply the defect of art in the workmen, and suddenly draw those lines and give those airs and lights which experience had not taught the painter." Gilpin, in his *Western Tour*, bears testimony that Charles "had singular skill in limning, and was a good judge of pictures;" and Valentine Green, the engraver, in his *Letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 1782, says that King Charles I. "amused himself often with drawing and designing."

These talents, founded on a true appreciation of Art, made the king a purchaser of pictures. On his accession, the royal palaces contained one hundred and fifty different works collected by Henry VIII., with a few purchased by Prince Henry. These Charles inherited. They formed the commencement of the great collection which he brought together. Of its extent and value, we have evidence in the unfinished catalogue left by Vanderdort, his *custode*. This manuscript classified four hundred and sixty pictures disposed in the palace of Whitehall alone, comprising, among works of lesser note, twenty-eight by Titian, nine by Raphael, eleven by Correggio, eleven by Holbein, sixteen by Julio Romano, seven by Parmegiano, seven by Rubens, seven by Tintoretto, three by Rembrandt, sixteen by Vandyke, four by Paul

Veronese, and two by Leonardo da Vinci. For the well-known collection bought of the Duke of Mantua, Charles is reputed to have paid 80,000*l.* The Duke of Buckingham, too, moved by the royal example, was a munificent collector. He purchased for a large price—Walpole says 10,000*l.*—a collection of paintings made by Rubens, which included nineteen works by Titian, twenty-one by Bassan, thirteen by Paul Veronese, eight by Palma, seventeen by Tintoretto, three by Da Vinci, three by Raphael, and thirteen by Rubens himself. The Earl of Arundel also made large purchases, chiefly of statues and busts, many of them obtained from Asia Minor. Charles induced Rubens to visit his court, and to paint for him, though Rubens' stay was short—probably not above a year. Vandyke, under the judicious patronage of Charles, settled in England; and these two eminent men established with great success a new style of portraiture in England, and gave birth to a native school of painters, in their pupils and imitators.

The English artists we have already mentioned rested their reputation on their miniature portraits; now, in the higher style of art, *William Dobson* (B. 1610, D. 1646) rose to much celebrity. He is the first English painter who distinguished himself in portrait and history, if we except Sir Nathaniel Bacon, who scarcely finds a place in the ranks of Art. Dobson painted the king, Prince Rupert, and several of the eminent men of his day. He was of great promise, but the evil times he fell upon, and his love of pleasure, prevented the development of his art by his early death. There is a fine portrait of himself and his wife at Hampton Court

Palace, a large, well-executed painting of the decollation of St. John at Wilton House, a family picture by him at Devonshire House, and a portrait of Cleveland, the poet, at Bridgewater House. His works approach nearly to those of Vandyke, and are scarcely inferior, except in the refinement of grace and drawing. In Scotland, *George Jamesone* (B. 1586, D. 1644), educated in the same school, attained great celebrity, and his works are still held in much esteem. These first dawnings of native Art were, however, trampled out in the fierce struggles which then arose, or chilled in the asceticism by which they were followed. In the days of the Commonwealth, we need only notice *Robert Walker*, who then rose into reputation, and died about the year 1660. He is chiefly noticeable as Cromwell's portrait-painter, and as the most eminent of our native artists, at a time when foreigners met with but little encouragement here. Several well-known portraits by him exist, and are not without merit. One of his portraits of Cromwell is at Warwick Castle.

The Restoration did not bring with it happier times for Art. Charles II. had neither the love for Art nor the judgment of his unfortunate parent. He took some pains, however, to secure and collect such of the scattered works of his father's collections as came to his knowledge; and Walpole quotes an interesting story of the king's visit, privately and unknown, to the widow of Oliver's son, to recover some of the miniatures by that great artist. *Sir Peter Lely* had come to England in 1641, when twenty-four years of age, remained during the unsettled days of the Commonwealth, and painted Cromwell's portrait. He now succeeded to the

court favour and patronage, which Vandyke had enjoyed during the previous reign, and for thirty years was the chief and most esteemed portrait painter, particularly of female portraits, in England. He is admirably satirized by Pope in his second epistle; and Walpole, in the same strain, says, "His nymphs trail fringes and embroidery through meadows and purling streams." But Art became less exclusively in the hands of foreigners; portraiture was largely encouraged, and native artists contended for a share of its profits. *Henry Anderton* (B. 1630, D. soon after 1665,) was employed by the king and the court in portrait painting. *Isaac Fuller* (D. 1672), a man of dissolute habits, painted portraits and allegorical subjects of greater pretensions than merit or taste. *John Greenhill* (B. 1649, D. 1676), the most distinguished pupil of Lely, brought his life to an early close by his intemperance; and *Robert Streater* (B. 1624, D. 1680), who was not without merit, and was appointed serjeant-painter to Charles II. on the Restoration, practised both as a landscape painter and in history. His work in the theatre at Oxford, and several altar-pieces in the churches of that city, remain in a good state of preservation.

We have now reached a period when we find opinions and notices of the artists of the day. Streater, long since forgotten, enjoyed living a great reputation. Indeed a poet, describing his allegorical picture at Oxford, bombastically prophesies—

> "That future ages must confess they owe
> To Streater more than Michael Angelo."

And Dr. Plot, the historian of Oxfordshire, tells of the appropriate representations, in the same picture, of Theology, Science, &c., "hovering in the clouds shedding

their benign influence; Rapine with fiery eyes, grinning teeth, sharp twangs, her hands imbued in blood, holding a bloody dagger in one hand, in the other a burning flambeau," and much more of the same terrible character. The painter is also mentioned in the gossiping pages of Pepys, a lover and more discriminating judge of Art. He notes, "I was carried to Mr. Streater's, the famous history painter, whom I have often heard of, but never did see him before, and there I found him and Dr. Wren (Sir Christopher) and several virtuosos looking upon the paintings which he is making for the new theatre at Oxford; and indeed they look as if they would be very fine, and the rest think better than those of Rubens in the Banqueting-house at Whitehall, but I do not so fully think so: but they will certainly be very noble, and I am mightily pleased to have the fortune to see the man and his work, which is very famous, and he is a very civil little man and lame, but lives very handsomely." Pepys also mentions, with some words of comment, painters apparently English, whose works had not sufficient merit to save them from oblivion. He says of "one Wright, but Lord! what difference there is between his works and Lely's." He "much commends the portrait-works" of Hales, and he goes to the Pope's Head tavern to see the fine painted room by Rogerson, but "he does not like it at all, though it be good enough for such a public room." He also mentions that he paid a painter named Savill, "for my little picture 3*l*."

Contemporary with these men, Pepys also notices *Samuel Cooper* (B. 1609, D. 1672), the nephew and pupil of Hoskins, who continued, and was distinguished for carrying to its highest pitch, the art of miniature-painting,

already so excellent. Though seldom attempting more than the head of his sitter, Cooper's works possess a grace, beauty, and finish which render them most cherished in the cabinets of collectors. His fame was of his own time as of ours, and we read of him with true interest in the naïve diary of Pepys, who, speaking of Hales, the artist we have just mentioned, says, "He has also persuaded me to have Cooper draw my wife's picture, which though it cost me 30*l.*, yet will I have it done." When this portrait is finished we find Pepys rather disappointed with his pretty wife "in little," though he calls it "a most rare piece of work." He mentions another fact of this great English artist, which we cannot omit. Speaking of "a most excellent miniature by Cooper of one Swinfin, secretary to Lord Malmesbury," which he describes as "done so admirably as I never saw anything:" he says, "The fellow died in debt, and the picture was seized by his creditors; and Cooper himself says that he did buy it, and gave 25*l.* out of his purse for it, for which he was to have had but 30*l.*" Following Cooper and his brother Alexander Cooper, who was of some repute, was a group of English portrait-painters, who practised chiefly miniature, in crayons, water-colours, and sometimes in oil. We need only catalogue their names, Thomas Flatman, Richard Gibson, the dwarf, William Gibson his nephew, and Edward Gibson, supposed his son; John Dixon, a pupil of Kneller, Alexander Marshall, William Hassel, Matthew Snelling, and Mary Beale, of whose works several well-known portraits exist. *John Riley* (B. 1646, D. 1691,) claims more particular notice. He was of a modest nature, and cast into shade by the presumptuous reputation of Lely, and Kneller to whom we will presently revert. He

painted many excellent portraits, among them a portrait of Charles, II., who is said on seeing it to have discouraged the bashful artist by exclaiming, "Is this like me? Then od's fish I'm an ugly fellow." But if cast down, Riley regained his courage, painted James II. and his Queen, and was appointed court painter to William and Mary. At Hampton Court there is a fine half-length portrait by him of Mrs. Elliott, which is a proof of his great merits. The face is well-drawn—the expression natural—and the hands and arms excellently painted. We must not omit also to notice *John Michael Wright* (B. about 1655, D. 1700). He was a native of Scotland, a pupil of Jamesone, and came to England in 1672, when sixteen or seventeen years of age. He is no doubt the "one Wright," whom Pepys mentions rather contemptuously, but he deserves much higher consideration. He painted some excellent portraits. The judges at the Guildhall are by him, and there is at Hampton Court, a whole-length portrait of Lacey, the player, in three characters; a fine work imitatively painted and low in tone, the figures simply and well grouped.

Tempted aside to continue the succession of English artists, we must return to *Sir Godfrey Kneller*, who followed Lely, and like him, was at the head of his profession for a generation, that we may show more fully the great influence which these two men exercised upon our art for above half a century. Kneller came to England in 1674 in his twenty-seventh year, and was employed both by Charles II. and James II. He was the most distinguished painter of the reign of William III. and of Queen Anne; and he lived to paint the portrait of George I., who created him a baronet in 1715. He died

in 1723, having gleaned a handsome fortune from his numerous sitters.

The sudden blaze of art which illumined the early years of the reign of Charles I. was soon extinguished. Among the causes of its decline—in which political events had undoubtedly for a time the chief share—was the tendency of the age to allegory. Rubens himself had initiated it in his nobly extravagant flatteries of Mary de Medicis in the Luxembourg and in the apotheosis of James at Whitehall, but in Kneller's, and worse in less able hands, such displays soon descended to vapid inanities. When a symbol or implement alone sufficed to create a hero or a demi-god, the painter was delivered from the labour of thought to revel in mere bravura of execution, and he became as commonplace as the heroes he reprsented.

The attributes of gods and heroes, of emperors and apostles, even the draperies in which holy or heroic personages were to be robed, and the colours suitable to each, had long been as traditional in the guilds and fraternities of art, as the modes of preparing the panels and canvas on which the painter wrought, or the grinding and admixture of his colours. Thus we find in *Peacham's Complete Gentleman,* published in 1661, "how according to truth to purtract and express eternity, hope, victory, fame, common safety, &c.;" and this is his formula. "The most ancient picture of eternity was expressed in the form of a fair lady having three heads, signifying those three parts of time, viz., the past, present, and to come; in her left hand a circle, pointing with her right forefinger up to heaven. The circle shews that she hath neither beginning nor end, and these three heads not

altogether improper to her." He describes also the accepted "manner of expressing and figuring floods, rivers, and all sorts of nymphs; the Muses, plants, winds, faunes and satyres; the seasons and months of the year." Of the ocean he says:—"He is represented like a surley old fellow with a black beard, long and unkembed locks, quite naked, save girt about the middle with a ship's sail, laying his leg over a dolphin's back; in his hand the stern of a ship, anker, oare or the like." But as he proceeds "the Complete Guide" becomes more minute, and tells us that we must paint "Apollo or Lot, which is all one, the physicall god, with long curled yellow haire, crowned with lawrell, his roab purple, his bow silver, his harp gold, his throne emeralds;" and of Mercury, he says:—"The witty messenger of the gods, they describe with long curled yellow haire, cloathed in a coat of flame-colour, over which a mantle purely white, trimmed with gold and silver, his beaver white, with white feathers, his shoes golden, his caduceus or rod, of silver." We cannot follow further this great authority, who for those desiring such information tells not only what should be the colours and hues of the passions and the affections; but also of Opinion, Gladness, Conversation, Law, and a host of the personifications of similar abstractions, not omitting to tell us to give "a dark flexinish hair, and sun-burnt complexion for a thief," which would be rather out of character for the jail-birds of our days.

Armed with such traditions, and skilled in the use of the crayon and brush, the fashionable painters of the end of the seventeenth century covered the walls of our palaces with acres of allegory, appropriately tenanted. Verrio, who was invited to this country by Charles II.,

was the hero of this art. Walpole calls him "an excellent painter for the sort of subjects in which he was employed, that is without much invention, and with less taste his exuberant pencil was ready in pouring out gods, goddesses, kings, emperors and triumphs over those public surfaces on which the eye never rests long enough to criticise, and where one should be sorry to place the works of a better master. I mean ceilings and stair-cases." For such works Verrio was rarely fitted, and while we may despise the sort of art, and be tempted to repeat the sneer of Pope, we ought to do justice to the many qualities which the painter really possessed. His great facility, the ease with which his figures are posed, the appearance of motion, the freshness and decorative look of the surface, were real merits which pleased the age in which he found employment, made him eminent in his own day, and by his popularity led to the further degradation of art. Such works were considered historical, and the portrait painter, who of all men ought to seek individuality, soon began to ape the same manner in his portraiture. Men were not content to be mere soldiers and sailors, mere kings and princes; they wished to be heroes and gods, while the ladies, faded denizens of the court and the palace, played at the least shepherdesses to the Junos or Venuses of their mistresses. Speaking of this period Fuseli says:—"Charles II., with the cartoons in his possession and the magnificence of Whitehall before his eyes, suffered Verrio to contaminate the walls of his palaces, or degraded Lely to paint the Cymons and Iphigenias of his Court, while the manner of Kneller swept completely away what might be left of taste among his successors." And in another place the same enthusiastic

lecturer said: "It was reserved for the German Lely and his successor Kneller, to lay the foundation of a manner, which, by pretending to unite portrait with history, gave a retrograde direction for nearly a century to both; a mob of shepherds and shepherdesses in flowing wigs and dressed curls, ruffled Endymions, humble Junos, withered Hebes, surly Allegros, and smirking Pensierosos usurp the place of propriety and character."

A walk through any of the great houses and galleries of our nobility will justify these remarks of the acid Swiss professor. But as they are epitomized in the galleries at Hampton Court, and open to all, and as the character of the very period is stamped upon this palace by the occupation of King William III., let us pass up the great staircase and through the rooms that we may see how far the above pungent criticism is justified. The staircase is painted on three sides and on the ceiling; and as this is the principal part of the work, it will suffice to direct attention to it. A quotation from the guide-book itself would, though most unintentionally, be nearly as ridiculous as any more studied criticism; but as this work does not so fully enter into the conventional and stereotyped composition employed by the painter, it may be as well to examine and criticise for ourselves.

In the heavenly region above—at least so far as blue sky and plenty of fleecy cloud-cushions for lazy gods and goddesses can make it such—a massive golden table hovers, supported on the clouds by heavy golden lions. Round it in full assembly are grouped the principal and secondary deities. Jupiter and Juno sit at the head. He, of course, is served by Ganymede riding on the eagle, while the bird itself is busily engaged in keeping

firm hold of Jupiter's thunderbolts. Of course, also, Juno is not without her peacock, and Iris is properly sliding down the rainbow. Were it not so common, it would seem curious to find the goddesses naked, while the gods are robed and even bear their armour in heaven; but then what would Neptune be without his trident, Pluto without his fork, or Time without his everlasting scythe—a most ungainly implement in good society? Mars and Venus must of rule be love-making, though his armour does not tempt a tender embrace. Juno's bird has beauty enough to claim a place in heaven, but some objection may be taken to Romulus' wolf and Silenus' ass, yet there they both are. All the old stock properties do good service over and over again, and except a little shifting and re-distribution of parts, one banquet is like another, and one ceiling the pattern of all.

This history painting, as it was called, led on to historical portrait painting—a grand name for the most commonplace art. Like the history painter, the portrait painter of the time had a set of stock ideas—attitudes and accessories for his sitters. The ladies, as we have said, figured as goddesses or shepherdesses—it seemed immaterial which was chosen; the men were a compromise, eking out a Roman emperor's habiliments with the large flowing wig of the time and other artistic properties, introduced sparingly or abundantly as the theme or the canvas might warrant. Thus in the portraits of the court beauties, the *innocence* of Nell Gwynne is typified by a lamb and a crook, while she is herself robed in a silken dis-array suitable to a court shepherdess. Another court beauty, perhaps with equal lack of merit,

is represented by the court painter with the helmet and shield of the Goddess of Wisdom. This art of historical portraiture reached its climax about the end of the seventeenth century, and Kneller's equestrian portrait of William III. is characteristic of the class. Let us describe this portrait by Pope's great disciple of nature. It is called "The Landing of William at Torbay." The Dutch hero would appear to have just ridden ashore. He is in a guise so truly comical that had not the prevailing fashion masked its absurdity, even the saturnine monarch himself must have smiled at his own figure. He is dressed in a costume neither Dutch nor Roman, but a farcical compound of the two, fit only for the hippodrome—a flowing curled wig, a cuirass and thigh-pieces with an ermine-lined mantle clothes the upper part of his body, terminating in bare arms, blue tights and sandals. His white horse, which he bestrides without saddle or stirrups, seems dancing a war-dance over shield, torch, and sword, the rider sitting with the complacent air of one who is performing an admired feat of horsemanship. Neptune, who may have helped him over the sea, is at his horse's heels, up to the middle in a clump of bullrushes! while two ladies, said to represent Flora and Plenty, offer fruits and flowers at the manifest risk of being trampled under foot, and above him, suspended in the air, Peace and Mercury, with a large family of little cupids, have charge of the helmet of the bareheaded monarch.

Thus the noble and dignified portraits of Vandyke, of Mytens and Jansen were succeeded by the affected allegories which Charles II. had learnt to admire during his long banishment to the Continent and sojourn at the

French Court; and the degeneracy had culminated at the period we have now reached—the reign of George I., of which Walpole says, "No reign, since the arts have been in any estimation, produced fewer works that will deserve the attention of posterity." Of the painters *Charles Jervas* (B. 1675, D. 1739) must be noticed, if only as the intimate friend of Pope, and the vain head of the poor mediocrities of his time, but nevertheless a scholar and a gentleman. With him was contemporary *Jonathan Richardson* (B. 1665, D. 1745), whose portraits were valued for the truth and firmness with which the heads were delineated, and *Sir James Thornhill* (B. 1676, D. 1734), whose decorations of public buildings, avoiding many of the errors of Verrio, are well known, particularly the cupola of St. Paul's Cathedral and the hall of Greenwich Hospital.

At the commencement of the reign of George II. Jervas and Richardson were at the head of their schools; before its termination Reynolds was fast rising into fame. Minor painters, whose works are now forgotten or little known, find some record in Walpole. Of these men *Francis Knapton* (B. 1698, D. 1788) was distinguished for his portraits in crayons, and was appointed painter to the Dilettanti Society, and the keeper of the King's pictures. There is a large portrait group in oil by him at Hampton Court, of the Princess of Wales and her family—a matter-of-fact work, without much painter-like feeling. *Thomas Hudson* (B. 1701, D. 1779), remembered as the master of Reynolds, was the pupil of Richardson, and, succeeding Jervas, then became the fashionable portrait painter of his day, though it strongly marks the degradation of art, that he, like his meaner followers, could only

paint the head of his sitter. Northcote says that "after having painted the head Hudson's genius failed him, and he was obliged to employ Van Aachen (Vanhaken) to put in the shoulders and to finish the drapery, of both of which he was himself incapable." *Francis Hayman, R.A.* (B. 1708, D. 1776), linked himself with the memories of our own time by his paintings in Vauxhall Gardens. He was a scene painter and was much employed in designs for book illustrations. Edward Edwards, in his *Anecdotes of Painting*, 1808, describes Hayman as having attained "a very considerable power in his art, and as unquestionably the best historical painter in the kingdom before the arrival of Cipriani." M. Rouquet, who wrote in 1752, bears testimony to Hayman's great contemporary reputation. He says, "History painters have so seldom an opportunity of displaying their abilities in England, that it is surprising there are any at all who apply themselves to this branch; whosoever happens to fall into this business very rarely meets with a rival. Those who are acquainted with the force of emulation, will therefore readily conclude that it is impossible there should be such able history painters as there might be if they had more emulation. Mr. Hayman, who professes this branch, is master of every qualification that can form a great painter." His work, "The Finding of Moses," which he presented to the Foundling Hospital, may be seen there. He lived to be one of the first members of the Royal Academy. *Francis Cotes, R.A.* (B. 1725, D. 1770), must be added to this short list. He, too, enjoyed a reputation in his day. Walpole says "that he arrived at uncommon perfection in crayons." He painted the Queen, with the Princess Royal, then an

infant, on her lap. Hogarth, who did not love any of the portrait painters, declared, probably not without a little malice, that Cotes was a better portrait painter than Reynolds—an opinion which posterity was far from sharing. *Allan Ramsay* (1709—1784), the only son of the author of the *Gentle Shepherd*, merits a high place with the foregoing. His portraits are honest and manly, and, if wanting in grace, are free from all affectation, well and powerfully painted. Of the landscape painters who were contemporary with the men we have just mentioned, we propose to say a few words in a subsequent chapter as introductory to the great men of that school who succeeded them.

CHAPTER II.

WILLIAM HOGARTH.

The great Founder of the English School—His personal Appearance and Character—The true Originality of his Art—The "Marriage à la Mode" described—Its clever Accessaries and Storied Back-grounds—The First and Last Scenes analysed—His great Merits as an Artist—Invention—Colour and Characterstic Drawing—Description of an Interesting Work in Hogarth's Manner hitherto overlooked.

In the preceding chapter, reserving one great name for separate consideration in this, we have traced the progress of art, and have described the state into which, during the first part of the last century, it had fallen in this country—fallen step by step lower and lower as each succeeding painter studied his predecessor rather than nature—either painting by the yard on the walls of hall or palace worn-out allegories, compounded of vapid commonplaces which had formed the stock properties of a long succession of mere decorators; or, in portrait, striving to catch the fashionable manner, the stale airs and graces of poor humanity, rather than honest individual expression, which, be it noble or mean, has in its native truth a charm that fashion cannot improve, but surely destroys.

"When things are at the worst they will mend," and truly things were at the worst, so far as art goes, when sturdy *William Hogarth* (born in London in 1697),

after passing honestly through his seven years' apprenticeship as an engraver on silver plate, began to think for himself, and found that copper, under the influence of true art, far transcended silver merely graven with fine lines and dead repetitions. Began to think for himself!—here is the true master-key—began to look at the world around him instead of at dark canvases, pictures over which Time had swung his scythe, and which, if once good, men had so botched and tinkered, so toned and begrimed, that their original identity was lost and gone; began to think that gods and goddesses had had their day, and that we might have had enough, even of saints and martyrs at second hand—that even "Beer-street" and "Gin-lane" might be made to teach better morality, and would certainly lend themselves to form a fresher art; "grew so profane," he says of himself, "as to admire *nature* beyond the finest productions of art," and acknowledged he saw, or fancied, delicacies in *the life* so far surpassing the utmost efforts of imitation that when he drew comparison in his mind, he could not help uttering blasphemous expressions against the divinity of even Raphael Urbino, Correggio, or Michael Angelo. For this, however, he adds, "though my brethren have most unmercifully abused me, I hope to be forgiven." He felt that while he cried out against the "black masters," whose works were then accounted divine, and necessarily included the great names falsely tacked to bad pictures, he might need forgiveness, lest in decrying the false he denied the true; lest in pulling up the tares he might be also rooting up the wheat.

Here was the man wanted; the reformer the art needed; one who was determined not to follow, but to

lead; one who had formed his art upon the observation of nature only, and who on that ground protested against schools which he called academies. His nature and character well fitted him for the task he had imposed upon himself; even his education as an artist proved the most suitable for him. A man almost of the people, mixing with the artisan, the manufacturer, and the tradesman daily and hourly; watching their weaknesses and foibles, studying their dispositions and characters, and "habituating himself," as he tells us, "with a view of making new designs, which was his first and greatest ambition, to the exercise of a sort of technical memory;" and again we learn how, "by repeating in his own mind the parts of which the objects were composed, he could by degrees combine and set them down with his pencil." The materials for his "Southwark Fair," the "March to Finchley," the Election Series, the Idle and Industrious Apprentices, were found among the objects by which he was surrounded in his work and everyday life—they were the *nature* which was to be his guide and teacher. It is wonderful how long men go on repeating the thoughts of others—sometimes unconsciously, sometimes of set purpose—since few dare to be original, and there is safety in precedent. It therefore needed one who would break altogether with the old both in subject and practice, and take a new departure in another course. And this Hogarth notably did. What was thought to constitute the portraits of his day, has been set forth in the last chapter—individuals without individuality, "likely and indeed all alike," as Foote makes Lady Pentweazle say of the work of one of the furnishing artists whom he satirizes.

Let us describe our reformer as he appears portrayed by himself, and see the man and his work together. There are two portraits available—one in the National Gallery, accessible to all who wish to study his lineaments, life-size on a head and shoulder canvas, the other, the property of Mr. Willett Adye, a small whole length, in which he is shown seated painter-like at his easel. Let us examine the life-size portrait. It shows a different school of art to that of the periwigged worthies of his predecessors—an honest, homely, matter-of fact Englishman; not the least idealized; his short nose a little inclined to turn up; his round open face, his clear blue eye and rather firmly closed lips, are characteristic of one who might be a warm friend or a bitter enemy, and who did not shirk what he saw in his glass as he wrought to display himself for posterity. His light hair is closely cut or shaven, for no doubt in the afternoon, as he would repudiate singularity, he wears his wig with flowing curls, like other men of his time, but in the morning, and at his easel, he is more at his ease in his furred cap. Poor ill-remunerated Wilson, whose portrait hangs near his in the same gallery, wears a night-cap; but Hogarth, now well-to-do, for he has reached his forty-eighth year, has a furred cap and tassel. Yet in this there is no pretension; he is evidently represented as he sat at his work.

Had he been quarrelsome in his boyhood, or in his 'prentice years, and got that deep scar in his forehead? We know no mention by his biographers of how it occurred. Yet there it is, like old Oliver's warts and pimples duly and literally rendered. His favourite pursuits are also shown. Three volumes of Swift's works

lie before him—Swift, whose satirical view of human nature so much resembled his own—his pallet also, and painted on it "the line of beauty and of grace," of which he knew little and wrote much; and then in front of him, as plain and homely as himself, and, no doubt, given, like his master, to bark and bite occasionally—there, as large as life sits his favourite companion, his dog—no sleek spaniel or slim greyhound, but a bandy-legged black nosed pug, not without some similarity to his master. If we add to this his figure, as seen in the smaller picture, he would appear to have been short and thick-set, a little inclined to bandy-leggedness himself, and altogether a man from whose outward appearance we should never expect the graceful and beautiful, or the refined in art. We have described his portrait, not solely to paint the man, but to mark the age of puerilities passing away, and truth and good sense revived by him—a new manner, which was to result in a great school of portrait painters, originating and derived from him. For as he has painted his very self in his own portraits, so it was with the portraits of others, whether of his wife, Jane, or of honest benevolent Captain Coram, whose good heart and kindly nature look forth from Hogarth's canvas as truly as from any written biography. We are told, àpropos of his wife's portrait, that she one day observed, touching his "Analysis of Beauty," "It is one thing, my dear, to scribble about beauty, but quite another to paint it;" which gave occasion to Garrick's pert remark, "I suppose he writes from his own ideas and paints from his wife."

As to the man we have described, he looks well calculated to stand all the revilings of his contemporaries,

the goddess and shepherdess, the Roman Emperor school of portrait painters and their patrons, the collectors of fiddle-brown saints and ropy-tendoned martyrs, of pseudo-Titians and second-hand Raphaels, for truly these did unmercifully abuse him all his days; nor was he slack in his retaliation with both pen and graver. A man with little sense of the refined and beautiful, little feeling for form, and unfitted to revive art in that direction, but with a deep love of truth and nature, and a keen satirical vein for follies, foibles, and humbug of every kind. He had, nevertheless, his own views of art, was gifted with the power to express them, and was destined to lay the foundations of a new school, whose originality is yet distinct, and in a marked degree different from any other school of modern Europe. He thought, we are told, "that both writers and painters had, in the historical style, totally overlooked that intermediate class of subjects which lie between the sublime and the picturesque, and he wished to compose pictures on canvas similar to the representations on the stage, and that they should be tried by the same test and criticised by the same criterion," and by this criterion he must himself be judged if we would fully understand his merits.

Let us from this point of view examine his greatest work—the pictorial drama of "The Marriage à la Mode." It is divided into six acts or tableaux, depicting the sacrifice of youth to money and rank, with its sad moral. In the first pictorial act the preliminaries of the barter are arranged by the conspiring parents. On the one side the miserly worshipper of money prepares to sacrifice his daughter; on the other the proud possessor of ancestral honours bargains for his son. In the second

act the marriage has taken place, and we are introduced to the domestic life of the ill-assorted pair—the debauched husband utterly indifferent to his young wife, and she coolly contemptuous of her imbecile husband—their establishment artfully shown to be one of riot, debauchery, and waste. The third tableau represents the wife's rapid progress in all the worst vices of her new rank. She has adopted the foreign custom of receptions in her dressing-room; foreign artists warble voluptuous airs as she sips her coffee; mock antiquities, the costly rubbish of yesterday's auction, lie littered around; and her paramour, a favoured lover in her ill-omened union, pours poisonous flattery in her willing ear. The fourth act is cunningly interpolated to give a glance at the vile life of the profligate husband, the betrayer of youth, himself betrayed, and suffering the foul curse of his crimes. The piece now hurries to its fearful climax. In the fifth picture, expediency and sin bear their first fruit; the wife has been enticed by her paramour from a masked ball to a house of ill-fame; she is followed by her husband, who, insensible to love, is sensitive to honour, and in a struggle with his wife's seducer is foully slain; the lurid light, the escaping murderer, the arrival of the watch, all contribute to the truthful terror of the scene, and lead us to the last act of this pictorial tragedy, where the wife poisons herself on hearing that her guilty lover has died by the hands of justice.

Now it is true that serial pictures were not new to art: religious subjects had been often so treated, as in the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, or the several acts of the Passion of our Lord. But the novelty of Hogarth's work consisted in the painter being the inventor of his

own drama, poet as well as painter, and in the way in which all the parts are made to tend to a dramatic whole, each picture dependent on the other, and all the details illustrative of the complete work; the same characters recur again and again, moved in different tableaux with varied passions; one moral running through all; the beginning finding its natural climax in the end. Another novelty is the wonderful way in which all the objects in the picture tend to illustrate the story, and yet are so strictly appropriate in themselves. Appropriate backgrounds have been common in all good Art, and in the Dutch school, on which Hogarth built his practice, Teniers and Ostade in low life, Terburg and Metzu in more genteel society, give us truthful glimpses of the scenery and into the dwellings of their countrymen, making us well acquainted with their home life. These artists painted what they saw around them, and thus their backgrounds are perfectly appropriate to the scenes they represented, whether a party of Dutch boors drinking and gaming in a tavern, a meeting of lovers, a morning conversation, or a musical assembly among the higher ranks; but in all these the background is no more than appropriate. In Hogarth's pictures not only is it as truly appropriate of time and place as in the best works of the Dutch masters, but it possesses the additional merit of adding to the dramatic interest of his work, illustrating in a series of episodes the current story of the piece. We will illustrate this more minutely by a description from the marriage series—say, the first and the last scenes.

As we have before remarked on the first picture, the two conspiring parents are consulting on their mutual

sacrifice. The father of the intended bride, a mean-looking vulgar citizen, with his whole soul fixed on money-getting, sits opposite the noble parent of his future son-in-law—sits uneasily on the edge of his chair, his sword between his legs, with the out-of-place appearance of a cur in a drawing-room. He carefully eyes the parchment deed of settlement drawn between "The Right Hon. Lord Viscount" and himself, purchasing rank for his child with gold, from which he unwillingly parts. Facing him the peer sits proudly erect, his coroneted crutch by his chair, his hereditary gout propped on soft cushions, his family genealogy unrolled beside him, springing from the loins of that father of untold sons, William the Conqueror. Standing behind the table is the wretched sinister-looking starved clerk of the wealthy citizen; what a miserly pittance does he pay his servants! He pushes the golden bribe towards the peer, but with it, as part payment, presents a mortgage on the lordly domains, which, appealing to the condescension he is showing, the titled beggar repudiates. On the other side of the picture the happy pair are seated on a sofa, and grouped with them the family lawyer, who has prepared the deeds. The future husband and wife sit back to back; no love is lost between them; no semblance of love is even thought necessary. He, it is true, loves himself, and glancing at his own foppish appearance in the glass, his spindle shanks and patched glands tell their own tale of his debauchery and profligacy. He is striving to take a pinch of snuff with elegance, and to display the brilliant on his finger, while she, listlessly passing the wedding ring backwards and forwards on her handkerchief, looks

the picture of sullen submission, and listens sulkily to the badinage of the lawyer, Counsellor Silvertongue. At the feet of the pair, a happy illustration of their future life, are two coupled hounds, the one ever desirous of moving when the other would be still.

So far as to the intention of the picture, with a few of its accessories; but the background, which is studiously contrived to fill its part in the drama, must be also described. The scenic walls of the apartment are covered with pictures—the noble owner is a man of taste: here are the "black masters" Hogarth so much decried; and what do they represent? Subjects surely not chosen for their beauty; not chosen as objects by which we would live surrounded; scenes of blood and crime—Cain killing Abel, Prometheus with his gnawing vulture, Judith as executioner of Holofernes, St. Lawrence roasting on his gridiron: these and like works, bearing no doubt names of high fame, and reputed of costly value, stamp the man of expensive habits. In the centre is the grandiose portrait of some noble ancestor, the very epitome of that vile school of French art which Hogarth abhorred. It is *à la grand monarque*, the empty head covered with a long and flowing wig, the body clothed in a cuirass, round the neck the Order of the Golden Fleece, on the breast blue and red ribbons—the right hand so placed as to show the jewelled ring, the left clasping, not the sword—that were too mean a weapon—but the thunderbolt of Jove. In the air above this hero the winds of heaven are personified blowing east and west at the same time to do his bidding, a cannon blazes at his feet, the ball painted in its flight. Here is a picture such as the fashion-mongers of that

day excelled in painting, and such as Hogarth hated and lived to put an end to. The ceiling of the room is also painted, as was often the case, in absurd defiance of sense and truth—such being frequently the work of foreigners, who palmed on the confiding barbarians of Britain the sheerest nonsense as high Art. It represents —strange subject for a ceiling!—Pharaoh and his hosts overwhelmed in the Red Sea, and may have been intended by Hogarth not only to satirize the false taste of the time, but accessorily to point out the end of overweening pride. There is in the background yet another incident heightening the dramatic interest of the tale. The citizen's lawyer looks out of the window, in his hand is a "plan of the new building for the Right Hon.," and he gazes with astonishment on the structure itself—a front of portico and column, half finished, and evidently remaining so for want of the money the settlements he is making are to supply; for the scaffold remains on the walls, yet no workmen are there, while lazy valets are grouped listlessly about the half-shapen stones.

Such, then, is Hogarth's background, cumulating its incidents and adding to the interest of the first scene of his drama. In the succeeding scenes this power finds even a stronger illustration; but we must confine ourselves to the last scene, which will suffice. This last picture is in perfect contrast to the first—there rank, and at least the appearance of riches, are represented; here the reign of prodigality and fashion, of sin and pride, is at an end; and the citizen's daughter, brought back to the vulgar home of her youth, is dying of poison she has taken on suddenly learning the public execution of her

criminal paramour. Dead in her father's arm-chair, a withered hag of a nurse brings her infant—all too late! to kiss his mother ere she dies. While the child, heir to the mortgaged mansion and family honours, rickety and in irons, patched and pimpled, bears the promised punishment of its father's sins, and tells the sad tale of its dead mother's neglect—tells that she has not fulfilled a mother's part, but left its tender nursing to hired service and careless chance. Motherless herself, had she a better nurture from her own hard father, who, grasping to the last, thinks more of removing the jewelled rings from her dead fingers than of his lost child, or the sad end of her high-flown hopes? And for the remainder of the group, painfully incongruous, an apothecary on one side noisily shakes the loutish old servant, who has brought in "the last dying speech" of the seducer of his mistress, which lies at her feet; and on the other, the physician walks out with his gold-headed cane—his last fee in his pocket. These are Hogarth's actors; we will now trace the scene—the background in which they acted.

We know that the citizen is a man of wealth. His aldermanic gown, hung on a peg, shows that he, too, has his honours, though of only City dignity. The room, however, is mean and empty; it holds little furniture, it is evidently the chamber of a man of niggard habits at home, who, when he feasts, feasts at corporate expense. His table is set out for his mid-day meal; but beside one untouched porker's head (a standing dish it would seem), bread and an egg is all his fare; untouched, however, the show-dish is not, for in the confusion of the moment a starved dog drags it from the table. The pictures on the walls are here of the Dutch school, representing

Dutch wit and Dutch filth—eating, smoking, drinking, and their Dutch consequences. In the first, a pair of topers, one of whom is attempting to light his pipe from the red nose of the other; in another, piles of meat and kitchen vegetables, with two hearts spitted. The alderman loves smoking, for his pipe is placed in the window; but to show his unsocial habits, one pipe only and a broken punch-bowl stand on the shelf, to indicate a fountain of good-fellowship long since run dry. The locality is given by Old London Bridge, seen through the open window, and the City arms in a roundel; and the life of penurious meanness is plainly told by the general effect of the dirty, cobwebbed, and empty scene.

It is not our purpose to extend the description of the works of Hogarth, or of any other master, further than is essential to the elucidation of the modes of pictorial treatment and habits of thought of those who, from any cause, have influenced the formation of the British school. For this reason Hogarth has been particularly dwelt upon, in the desire to show how largely he worked a change for the better, by influencing his successors to look to Nature for their art—to despise mere repetitions of stale subjects from masters long bygone, and thoughts diluted over and over again. He treated men and women as human beings, and felt that the commonest phase of existing society might be rendered pictorially interesting. This, now it has been accomplished, may be thought a small thing; and as the courtiers sneered at Columbus, when he broke the egg to poise it, so some may now undervalue what Hogarth effected. But experience daily proves how tenaciously men cling to error, when sanctioned by high authority; and it is well

to remember that years after, Reynolds himself, so original both as a painter and thinker, held that the "Death of Wolfe," being a heroic subject, should be treated—not in the costume of the day—not as our soldiers fought on the heights of Abraham, but with classical undraped forms, and was only convinced of his error by the success of West's picture. In his other Art-qualities, Hogarth, though educated as an engraver rather than as a painter, was by no means deficient. His execution, though solid, was more varied than that of his contemporaries—his handling easy and facile, from which cause, added to his having used a simple vehicle for his colours, his pictures have not greatly suffered, except perhaps by a sort of retributive justice at the hands of vampers-up of "black masters," who have endeavoured by repeated varnishings to reduce the works of their old enemy to the same dark complexion as those he condemned. The composition and grouping of his figures, while eminently natural, are agreeably adapted to the display of his subject. His general colouring, never meretricious, is always sober and true, sometimes even excellent; the flesh of the individual heads, often felicitously handled, interchanging the warm tints and greys without appearance of muddiness.

The *drawing* of Hogarth, like that of all our British painters, has been unceasingly decried, but somewhat unfairly. The term drawing is used by many to express two distinct qualities, which has led to a confusion of ideas, from which much of the abuse of our artists has arisen. It is used indifferently to define the sense of what is most refined and beautiful in form, and also the power of imitating form, that is, objects. Now in the

first sense there is no doubt that Hogarth was deficient, and notwithstanding his good opinion of his own powers, he was certainly disqualified to attempt subjects of high art and pure form; his historical pieces were worse than failures; his "Sophonisba," perhaps, beneath criticism; and it is doubtful even if the sense of the harmonies of fine form were not wanting in his nature, as the harmonies of music are to many ears, and the harmonies of colour to the colour-blind. But in the other sense of the term, that is, the power of creating or imitating forms suitable to his own range of art, he was in every way a master draughtsman. Who could improve the action or motion of his figures, or their physical expression? Take as an instance, among others, that branded profligate debauché, the husband, in the second picture of the marriage series. Mark the debilitated curve of the body, the helpless feebleness of the outstretched legs, the poise of the head, hanging weakly on the muscles of the back of the neck, the characteristic outline of the thin emaciated legs—in short, the whole action as well as the individual parts of the figure; and it will be acknowledged that the artist was no feeble draughtsman who could produce such a work as this, and numerous others in his pictures, which from time to time have served our lecturers on anatomy with subjects to illustrate motion, attitude, and expression.

Moreover, Hogarth's power of imitating and his memory of form and expression, whether arising from the mode in which he tells us he exercised it or not, must have been very great. For many of his most felicitous creations it is obvious he could never have used a model. It needed not that he should have told us such

was his practice. The curious habit of sketching upon his nail as a help to memory could assist him but little, and he must have possessed a strong added power of retaining, combining, and reproducing incidents he had seen, or characters he met with and made the subjects of his study. In conclusion, it is not too much to say of this great artist, that in the subjects he treated he has had no equal among his many successors, and that he still stands alone and unrivalled, justifying every epithet of his friend Garrick's tender muse—

"Farewell, great painter of mankind,
Who reach'd the noblest point of Art;
Whose pictur'd morals charm the mind,
And through the eye correct the heart.

"If genius fire thee, reader, stay;
If Nature touch thee, drop a tear;
If neither move thee, turn away,
For Hogarth's honour'd dust lies here."

Hogarth married clandestinely, in 1730, the daughter of Sir James Thornhill, the painter. He died childless at his house in Leicester Fields, 26th October, 1764, of an attack of dropsy, and was buried in Chiswick churchyard. That he had not amassed wealth by his art we may assume from the fact that his widow received from the Royal Academy a pension of 40*l.* a year from 1787 to 1789, when she died at the age of eighty years.

We recently met with some paintings that connect themselves with the name of Hogarth which it may not be out of place to describe here. They are a curious relic of Hogarth's time, perhaps even some of the work of his hand, and are in a house, No. 75, Dean Street, Soho, said to have been the residence of Sir James Thornhill. Entering this house from the front door you are opposite the bottom of a flight of stairs occupying

three sides of the hall, the fourth side, on the first floor, forming a passage or gallery leading past the front room to two apartments lighted from the back of the house. Up to the height of this gallery the lower floor has been painted to imitate channelled stone-work, terminating on the first floor, level with a richly-ornamented stone stringing; above that level, on the wall opposite the gallery, is a painted representation of a colonnaded corridor, having two arched openings between coupled columns with an ornamented balustrade, and a third arched opening between columns opposite the windows. The other side of the corridor is represented as open to the sky; above the entablature which the columns support is a covered ceiling, and in the centre an oval perspective of a balustrade, opening also to the sky, with figures looking over it towards the spectator. But the principal interest in the work is concentrated on groups of figures looking out from the arched openings below. In each of these openings there are five figures of small life-size, painted with a free hand and much skill, and of the Thornhill period. They call to mind some of the figures in Hogarth's pictures; one lady especially may have been Lady Thornhill, from the likeness to Mrs. Hogarth, and all have, more or less, the appearance of portraits, while they are very unlike, in treatment and execution, the works by Thornhill's hand at Greenwich and Hampton Court. One of the figures is a black servant with a turban, such as we see in the "Marriage à la Mode."

It is traditional that Hogarth ran away with Miss Thornhill from this house. He most probably had ready access to it to enable him to win her affections, and we

know that he studied in Thornhill's academy. Did he work on these paintings under her father, and do they represent any of the knight's family? These are interesting questions, and the work itself possesses much interest in relation to English art. The house is now in the occupation of a large manufacturer of tinned wares, and is used as a store for these goods, with which it is filled in every direction. The picture has been painted in oil on the walls, which have been plastered with a somewhat rough surface, then deeply saturated with oil, and painted over with a full pencil. It would be a work of great difficulty to remove the paintings, which are in a good condition, and though the browns have a little broken up, the work is, on the whole, remarkably fresh and pure.

CHAPTER III.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

Systems of Art Study—Their Absence in England—And consequent Bad Art—Early Attempts to found Schools—Exhibitions at the Foundling Hospital and the Society of Arts—Their Success—Schism among the Artists—Out of which rose the Royal Academy—Its Constitution and Objects—Its Opponents and their Grievances—The House of Commons' Inquiry, 1838—The Royal Commission of Inquiry, 1863—Report of the Commissioners—Opinion upon their Recommendations.

THE century which forms the subject of this work witnessed a wide-spread love of Art among all classes, and a corresponding increase in the number of its professors, as well as a great change in the relations between the art-teacher and the art-student. The means of studying such art as was practised in England before the time of Lely and Kneller, cannot be very clearly traced; but it seems probable from such slight notices as incidentally occur, that the youth entering the profession of a painter was formally apprenticed, in the ordinary manner, to some master or artist of more or less eminence. For his master, and with him, the young pupil laboured, and was gradually initiated into all his methods—secrets as they were then deemed. He learnt the mode of preparing his canvas or panel, of grinding and tempering his colours, of mixing his tints, of executing his first and second painting, and the use of

the transparent glaze in finishing. He learnt the mechanical part of his profession rather than its great principles, and thus trained, the apprentice naturally followed in the footsteps and methods of his master.

On the Continent better principles of teaching had long prevailed. The academic system was established in the great Italian cities where Art flourished, so early as the middle of the fourteenth century; and both the atelier system and the apprentice system had been used to train and keep up a succession of artists in all the great foreign schools. We have just described the latter system, under which the pupil commenced his teaching in the drudgery which is now the work of the artist's colourman. The atelier system, which arose out of it, became almost a necessity in an age when great works were usually confided to individual artists. It originated in Italy where the decoration of a church or a palace was the work of one great master, who drew around him many youths, some partly educated, others of more matured proficiency, who were employed, not on their own inventions, but in carrying out the designs of their master. Thus we learn that Raphael had in his studio five or six men of great talent, who not only enlarged his sketches into cartoons, but actually completed them on the walls. In Flanders, also, Rubens with his pupils and imitators are another remarkable example of the working of the atelier system; their works in the gallery at Antwerp represent his art in many phases, mostly of degenerate extravagance. Of these systems, no one, at the time of which we write, had taken any firm root in England. Our native artists were few and unknown—they were not supposed capable of competing with

foreigners—they had only just begun to stir themselves to provide some established means of study, and some link of professional union; and in this effort they were joined by many whose art was chiefly developed in the meaner wants of manufacture. The sign-painters found full employment, and several painters who attained distinction in art arose from among them. Coach painters also, when the panels of carriages were decked with loves and graces, aspired to the highest walks in art, and so did pre-eminently scene-painters, who then, as in our own day, numbered many artists who have reached high distinction. Add to these, engravers, designers, modellers, and chasers, and we see how large a number of men, though filling different positions in art, must all have equally lacked the means of instruction essential to their progress.

Portraiture was early the prevailing fashion, and all had their portraits painted; one renowned foreign artist succeeding the other, as we have already narrated, to whom all the great and distinguished resorted. They brought over their pupils and countrymen as their assistants, according to the Continental practice, and we find also, that some few of our own countrymen sought to share the advantages to be derived from the same pupilage. Jamesone had studied in the atelier of Rubens, at Antwerp; Dobson, if not the pupil of Vandyke, was generously assisted by him; Greenhill and Davenport were taught by Lely; and Kneller, who appears to have exclusively employed foreigners, made the first practical attempt, in 1711, to found an institution, of which he was to be the head, for giving professional instruction to students in art. About the same

time, also, several other short-lived societies or clubs were formed with the same object. In 1724, Sir James Thornhill, our own countryman, opened an Art Academy at his house, and submitted to Lord Halifax, then Prime Minister, a detailed proposal to establish a royal academy of Art. Next, Vanderbank converted an old Presbyterian meeting-house into an academy, which struggled on for a short existence, owing to the attractions of the living model. William Shipley then succeeded in establishing a school, known as the St. Martin's Lane Academy, in which, for nearly thirty years, all our best artists studied. These repeated attempts to provide the means of studying drawing, for they extended no further, were inherently defective—mere makshifts for an academy open to all which should authoritatively teach both the principles and practice of Art, support its traditions, dignify its professors, knit them together in their common pursuit, and thus encourage the arts they practised. The ephemeral schemes we have mentioned, so far from possessing these advantages, were unsuited even to teach the elements of Art. There was no possibility of establishing or enforcing any prescribed routine of study, or of making and maintaining any regulations whatever; and though Shipley's school may boast a somewhat prolonged existence, it was due, perhaps, more to the absence of any other, than to any improvement in its own methods or regulations.

Monsieur Rouquet bears testimony to this. In his work *On the Present State of the Fine Arts in England*, 1755, speaking, no doubt, of Shipley's school, and of the attempt then made to found an academy, he says: "The English artists have established a public drawing-school

in London, where they have supported for some time, with great order, and even with success to their pupils, a model of each sex, by the annual and voluntary subscription of those who come there to learn. This institution is admirably adapted to the genius of the English; each man pays alike, each is his own master, there is no dependence; even the youngest pupils with reluctance pay a regard to the lessons of the masters of the art, who assist them continually with an amazing assiduity. Some of those who contribute to the support of this school with a view of rendering the Arts more respectable and at the same time of establishing a public free school, entered into a scheme of incorporating themselves into an academy. They imagined that as soon as they had chosen the professors and other officers, and established a great many laws, for which the English are famous, they had erected an academy. And what was very droll, lest they should give offence to any in the business, by excluding them from a nomination to the professorships, they named almost as many professors as there were artists. But they forgot to observe that this sort of establishment can never subsist without some subordination, either voluntary or forced; and that every true-born Englishman is a sworn enemy to all such subordination, except he finds it strongly to his interest."

That the artists themselves urgently felt the want of some such institution is proved by the efforts they made to found one, no less than by the degraded art of the time. Edward Edwards says, in his *Anecdotes of Painting*, that "when Reynolds entered upon the study of painting (*circa* 1740), the Art was in so low a state, that it was scarcely possible to procure by instruction the

necessary and primary principles by which the mind of the student could be formed; and to this circumstance it is owing that Sir Joshua never obtained a perfect or masterly knowledge of the human figure, a deficiency which he afterwards severely felt and candidly acknowledged." Another authority, the Abbé le Blanc, in his well-known *Letters from England*, speaking of the same period, thus describes the state of our Art:—"The portrait-painters are at this day more numerous and worse in London than ever they have been. Since Mr. Vanloo came hither they strive in vain to run him down, for nobody is painted but by him. I have been to see the most noted of them; at some distance one might easily mistake a dozen of their portraits for twelve copies of the same original. Some have the heads turned to the left, others to the right, and this is the most sensible difference to be observed between them. Moreover, excepting the face, you find in all the same neck, the same arms, the same flesh, the same attitude; and to say all, you observe no more life than design in these pretended portraits. Properly speaking, they are not painters; they know how to lay colours on the canvas, but they know not how to animate it. Nature exists in vain for them, they see her not, or if they see her, they know not the art of expressing her."

M. Rouquet, in his work before quoted, tells us that "two rival artists took it into their heads to have entirely to themselves another painter, whose name was Vanhaken, to be employed in the drawing of the drapery; this man had real abilities, and might have done much better things, but chose to confine himself to this branch because he was sure of business. The two painters

agreed to pay him eight hundred guineas a year, whether they could find work for him to this amount or not; and he on his side engaged to paint no drapery but for them. When either of those painters was employed to draw a picture, it was frequently on condition that the drapery should be done by Vanhaken; and indeed, his drapery was charming, in an excellent taste, and extremely natural. The two rival painters who had thus engrossed Vanhaken, occasioned a great deal of confusion among the rest of their brother artists who could not do without his assistance. The best of them knew not how to draw a hand, a coat, or ground. They were obliged to learn it, and of course to work harder—sad misfortune! From that time ceased at Vanhaken's that extraordinary sight when he used to have canvases sent from different parts to London, and by the stage-coaches from the most remote towns in England, on which one or more masks were painted, and at the bottom of which the painters who sent them took care to add the description of the figures, whether large or small, which he was to give them. Nothing can be more ridiculous than this custom, which would have still continued had Vanhaken still continued."

The opinion which this state of English Art then justified, has been maintained on the Continent to our own time, and is only at last giving way to more favourable impressions. An Englishman will look in vain for any work by his countrymen in the great Continental galleries, with one exception only, so far as we are aware. The same opinion long prevailed at home, and our first great painter, Hogarth, did not look for any improvement from schools or academies, which he actively opposed. He objected

to a staff of paid professors; he thought the promoters of such foundations self-seeking, and he had no hope that the Art of his country, which he depreciated, could be improved by academies. But his arguments, though sincere, and the offspring of his own self-teaching and rough independence, have an exclusive tone, and in our day appear narrow-minded, as they were certainly fallacious. When native Art, stimulated by his great example, began to take root and to assert its powers, the necessity of some guild or corporation of artists, which had been agitated from the commencement of the century, became more and more apparent; and while many asserted that Art could find no home on English soil, others with larger faith continued their sanguine efforts for its promotion. Both the Dilettanti Society and the Society of Arts, by the influence of their publications and the premiums they offered, endeavoured to stimulate and reward young artists, and the former Society proposed to join the artists in founding an academy which they were prepared to build. The Duke of Richmond also opened his gallery, supplied with fine casts from the antique, as a place for study, and some of the chief artists were its frequenters.

All these efforts did, no doubt, leave some impress on the state of the Arts; but the artists felt another great want. They demanded something more than a nurse and a teacher; they were emulous of public applause, which they desired to seek by the exhibition of their works. Without the means of studying their profession, and without a public appreciating Art, the artists seemed powerless to help themselves. That they sensibly felt their defects, so sharply characterized by the Abbé, is

plain from the expedients they used to conceal them. The portrait painter thrust into the sitter's waistcoat, and so hid, one of the hands he was unable to draw, and the other he managed to dangle out of his picture; or he had resource to the "draperyman," who added to his work all that was required beyond the face. So hampered and fettered at the very threshold of their profession, the artists made the ineffectual attempts we have described to found academies where they might study the figure from the antique, and draped or nude, from the life. The means of exhibition, the second great impediment which barred the progress of native Art, with the proper facility for study, eventually found a solution together—the one proving the direct road to the other. In the year 1745, Hogarth and seventeen of the most reputed artists presented their best works to the Foundling Hospital, then recently established, with a view to make known their powers, though not, it would be unjust to infer, without charitable motives; and to their gratified surprise, so great was the attraction of their pictures, that the Hospital, then as now out of the range of fashion, became the gay lounge of the *beau monde*. St. Bartholomew's Hospital was also gratuitously decorated in the same manner. The artists were elated by their success. They could not be expected to provide continued excitement for the public by the gift of their best works; but having discovered that there existed a large love of amusement and novelty, if not of Art, they were able so far to make the experiment subservient to their purpose, that from it arose the permanent establishment of annual exhibitions.

The Society of Arts lent their great room, and in

1760 the artists opened there the first exhibition for the sale of their works. The admission was free, and the room crowded. A second year of great success, and a third in Spring Gardens, where a charge of one shilling was made for admission, confirmed the scheme; and in 1765 the artists, comprising mainly the body associated by their studies at Shipley's school, obtained a charter of incorporation; and, still with increasing success and increasing receipts, held their exhibition in 1766, and again in 1767. But with success were mixed the seeds of dissension, increased by the discussion of plans for enlarging the objects of the young incorporation, and its own inherent defects. Its management was badly defined, for though the instrument named the chief artists of the day as the governing body, it gave the ultimate control, in general terms, to the whole of the incorporated members, who, grasping at a larger share of power, and straining their authority, at once displaced two-thirds of the appointed Managers. They were shortly followed by the remainder of their colleagues, on the ground that they were placed hopelessly in a minority in the body, which had in a questionable manner usurped their functions, and in whose proceedings they had no confidence.

At this period there was not a large body of artists, and of them only a fraction had attained any distinction. Art was therefore represented by a very limited number of eminent men, surrounded by utter mediocrities, all of whom, equally with the best, dubbed themselves artists. The state of the profession is well described in a pamphlet, published in 1771, *On the Conduct of the Royal Academicians while Members of the Incorporated Society of*

Artists. The writer says, "Previous to the era of exhibitions the artists of this kingdom seemed few in number and fewer in note; they however held assemblies at stated periods, the affairs of which were managed by a committee of sixteen chosen annually, and they supported a small academy in Saint Martin's Lane by a subscription among themselves, at which place most of the present artists received the rudiments of their education in the art of design; for the rest they were, generally speaking, the property of the picture-dealers, at that time their chief employers, and held by them in somewhat the same kind of vassalage and dependence that many authors are by booksellers at this day. In this constrained situation their thoughts and discourse at their several meetings generally turned on the hard treatment they found, and naturally terminated in wishes and projects for the removal of those defects and impediments under which they laboured." From these difficulties, as we have shown, accident at last relieved the artists, who formed a society and obtained a charter. The governing body who were named in this instrument consisted of the most distinguished artists; and it could hardly be expected that the leading men of the profession, when displaced in the manner already described, would submit to the rule of those filling its inferior ranks. They not only felt that their own position was prejudiced, but that the larger interests of the whole profession were jeopardized; and after mature deliberation, judging it no longer safe to continue a part of the management, they withdrew from the Society. The explanation they addressed to the Society was temperate and even dignified. The whole affair was, however, loudly attributed to jealousy and intrigue.

The pamphlet we have just quoted takes the other side. It is a very temperately written appeal, though it very clearly shows the great irritation of the two parties. The members of the Incorporated Society seem to have had just cause of complaint—that the directors permanently seized the entire management of the Society, setting the whole body at defiance; and that, on a reference to the Attorney-General in 1768, his opinion, which should have been binding on both parties, was against the directors, but was repudiated by them, though they had submitted the case in the terms most favourable to their own views. Nor does it tell in favour of the directors that before quitting the Society they destroyed their minutes from the 19th of November, 1764, to the 11th March, 1765, and again from the 13th June, 1765, to the 21st March, 1766. Mr. Moser, who became the keeper of the Royal Academy at its foundation, also seems to have used some jockeyship to obtain the transfer of the casts and implements of the St. Martin's Lane Academy to the so-called Royal Academy then set up in Pall Mall, and eventually to the body with that name founded by the King in 1768; and the members of the Incorporated Society complained, and not without good reason, that they were thus deprived of the means of study, as they could not, in compliance with the regulations of the new Academy, submit their works as candidates for admission to men, some of whom had been their pupils. The schism thus appears to have been caused by a struggle for power rather than from professional jealousy.

The jealousy of artists has been made a by-word, and a ready solution for any difficulties which the pro-

fession has had to encounter. Now, it is quite certain that in all the professions there is much rivalry, and some individual jealousy; but, speaking with all frankness and with much experience, we are quite sure that this bad passion does not belong to the artists as a class—far from it; for though in the practice of Art, as of everything else, there are many who unhappily prove unsuccessful, and are ready to attribute their failure to any other cause than their own want of talent or of perseverance, we should do very wrong to accept the vague assertions of a few of this class for more than they are really worth. It is a peculiarity in Art that many men enter the profession entirely self-taught; and these men, both within and without the Academy, are largely indebted to their professional brethren for much generous assistance. There are few artists of merit who could not tell of kindness, encouragement, and help received in their young days, when such assistance was the most precious; few who have reached eminence who would not testify that their talent was first recognized and lauded by their competitors, whose critical appreciation is always the harbinger, and properly so, of public applause and patronage. Artists are the true critics of the works of their brethren: their friendly opinions, hints, and suggestions, freely given, are of the greatest value; they are all instructors of each other, urged by friendly rivalry, not silenced by petty jealousies. It is thus alone that true Art should or can progress, every rising genius creating by his originality a new field for himself, not standing in the way of others, but increasing the spread of Art to the common advantage of all its professors.

We have, however, digressed. The schism we have narrated was important from the greater institution which arose out of it. Another attempt had failed. The absence of any established system of teaching was as much felt as ever, but some experience had been gained; and it had been proved that from the proceeds of annual exhibitions a great Art school might be supported, while the exhibitions themselves were found to be not only a great incentive to the artists, but a great means of their improvement. It is questionable and useless now to speculate how far the artists foresaw these indirect advantages. It is probable that their object was limited to public applause and the sale of their works, and that they did not contemplate the valuable instruction to be gained by the direct contrast and comparison of their works.

From these great wants the Royal Academy of Arts arose. The distinguished body of artists who had left the Incorporated Society found access to King George III. The young monarch looked favourably on Art and the artists, and encouraged them to submit a detailed plan of the institution for which they sought his support. Of this his Majesty not only approved, but, placing himself at its head, he assured the artists of his protection and favour. The royal approval was, however, the private act of the King. It conferred no legal authority or obligation. The institution then founded is not a corporate body; it holds no charter under the Great Seal; nor is the approval of any of its acts by the Crown, or the election of its members, certified by the signature of a Secretary of State, which is necessary to give it constitutional recognition and vitality. Yet in its character the Academy is no less a national institution and the re-

presentative of the national Art, and its members cannot dissociate their privileged position from the duties and responsibilities which it entails upon them.

The scheme of the Royal Academy includes the maintenance of schools free to all who have mastered the rudiments of Art and are of good character; exhibitions free to all whose works possess sufficient merit; and to this is added the generous provision, that any surplus arising from exhibitions, after defraying the expenses of the schools and providing for future contingencies, shall be devoted to the relief of necessitous artists, again without exclusion, for the benefit of all. The Academy consists of forty members (though only thirty-six were appointed at the commencement), painters, sculptors, and architects by profession, to whom two engravers have recently been added; and, avoiding the error of the Incorporated Society, the management was placed exclusively in this body, which is self-elective. The only qualification for admission is fair moral character, high professional reputation, the age of at least twenty-five years, and residence in Great Britain. The government is in the General Assembly, and in the President and Council of eight members, one-half changing each year, and every member serving in rotation. The officers comprise a Secretary, a Keeper, who has charge of the instruction in the schools, both elected by the members, and a Treasurer and Librarian appointed from among the members by the Crown. Members are also annually selected by the Council to superintend the teaching; and professors are appointed to lecture on Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, and Anatomy. The Academy also comprises twenty-four associated members,

four of whom are engravers. This body has no share in the management, but enjoys all the other advantages the Academy can offer, and from it alone the Academicians are elected. Such were the chief features of the original institution, and they have been maintained to the present time, except that, yielding to the claims long pressed upon them, the Academicians have added two engravers to the governing body. Thus a permanent institution was founded which provided for the maintenance of efficient schools, for annual exhibitions, and, supplying a want quite as urgent in the interests of Art, united the most eminent of our native professors, associated them in a generous rivalry, gave them the recognition and rank which election to such bodies professionally confers before all other distinctions, and, by the impetus thus supplied, gradually raised the Arts to a high place in public estimation.

The establishment of the Royal Academy dates from the 10th December, 1768. Assured of the favour and support of the King, located by his munificence in an edifice belonging to the crown, and associating (almost without exception) all the eminent artists of the day, its members, warned by the failures of previous schemes, at once opened their schools. Literature and science had long possessed influential bodies distinguished as their representatives. Such a body was at last constituted for Art; and though its members could not look forward to the wealthy fellowships with which the universities are endowed, or its professors to the lucrative fees of their compeers in the other professions, they heartily accepted their mission, and laboured zealously with the hope to found a national school from out the untaught mediocrity

by which they were surrounded. How great this mediocrity was, will be sufficiently shown by an example from the Exhibition catalogue of the Society of Artists in 1767. Opening at random we find—

"Two birds in shell-work, on a rock decorated with sea-corals.
"A Landscape in human hair.
"A Frame of various devices, cut in vellum with scizzors, containing the Lord's Prayer in the compass of a silver threepence.
"A Cypher, with his Majesty's crest.
"A George and Dragon and a Device."

And of such plenty more. "A Cupid crowning two Harts," probably designed for the ensuing Valentine's day, and "Deceptions," whatever they may mean, by more than one artist, braces of pheasants, partridges, hares, and all the game that flies or runs; and fruit and flowers enough to stock a fruiterer's shop. In this company, however, appears "Two large Models in Plaster," by Master Flaxman. It is no wonder that such a genius, modest as he was, or that Reynolds, who had a year or two previously adorned the walls with his "Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy," and other glorious works, should have shunned such company, and the government of a body of which such exhibitors formed a majority.

We have other evidence of the material out of which the national school was to be formed. Edward Edwards, already quoted, a man of irreproachable character and honest judgment, aspired to continue the memorials of Art and artists in this country, to which Horace Walpole had in his *Anecdotes of Painting* given such interest. The dry facts collected by Edwards relate to the period between 1780, the date of Walpole's work, and his own death in 1806; his materials comprise notices of no less than 192 artists, few of whom indeed would have any

claim to be styled painters in the present day. They practised largely as mere picture-dealers, cleaners, and restorers (an occupation which, he sarcastically remarks, "forms a good resource for invalids in painting"), drawing-masters, or second-rate mezzotintists, and copyists. The chief occupation of the best of them seems to have been face-painting or landscape, mere topography, though occasionally we are told of an historical painter who received the prizes of the Society of Arts, or the Academy gold medal, for his compositions. Of the whole number, probably not the names of twenty whose works are now known could be selected, but among those twenty some six or seven have left imperishable names in English art. Of these great men, and their lasting influence upon our school, we shall speak at length in the following chapters. They became members of the new Academy, which was adorned by their talents and taught by their example. Reynolds, whom artists love to speak of as "Sir Joshua," was unanimously hailed the first president, and his annual discourses to the students, in their great literary ability and instructive dicta, vie with the charming productions of his pencil.

The creation of the new institution seemed opportune. Our artists who had sought instruction on the Continent soon found that resource closed to them by the wars which ensued, while foreign artists were equally excluded here, and the interchange of engravings and works of Art ceased. Of this we find evidence in Prince Hoare's *Academic Annals*, 1809, where he tells, "that no efforts have been wanting, that letters had been repeatedly addressed to their former correspondents at the Continental Academies, but no response received." The

Academy then became the means of preserving the traditions and maintaining the study of Art, of which it taught the elements in practice and the principles in theory, yet without dogmatism, leaving its pupils to follow their own paths free from the mannerism of the schools. We had no public galleries, as now, freely thrown open; our private collections were unknown or inaccessible to the student, and Art arrived at so low an ebb would have stagnated. But a more original school arose out of its very isolation, and native Art self-dependent sought its own inspirations. The Academy schools afforded the means of study—the seed-time was then—the harvest could only be looked for in the future; yet its advent was certain, and may be traced in the history of our school, round which new institutions have been formed; while the love of Art, first developed in the metropolis, has spread into the provinces and our great manufacturing towns, and a succession of eminent men, who own the Academy as their common parent, have well maintained the reputation of the English school.

Yet the Academy has not been without enemies and detractors. It was assailed at its birth, as begot in intrigue. The exclusion of the engravers (lately admitted) raised up many talented opponents. It has the gift of professional rank and distinction, and its elections to fill up the ranks of a limited body could not fail to cause disappointment and rankling ill-will. It has annually to sit in judgment upon twice the number of works of Art which it can by any possibility exhibit, and not only of necessarily rejecting one-half, but the hard task of assigning to about 1,200 accepted the relative place on its walls demanded by their respective merits. We need

not say that the bestowal of honours is in all cases an invidious privilege, or that the interests of an important profession, of men nervously sensitive, cannot be dealt with from year to year, without many heart-burnings and recriminations: or that, with the best intentions and the most considerate deliberation, such may not be well-founded. The Academy cannot claim to be unlike any other human tribunal, infallible, or its judgments faultless. We do not, however, in the contemporary writings of now nearly a century, find any very cogent reasons in the arguments by which the Academy has been assailed, or in the complaints which have, in several instances, been made of its partiality and injustice. They mostly rest on personal grievances angrily told. Such was notably the fact in the House of Commons' inquiry in 1836, when the evidence of four or five disappointed artists was of a character that would have had no weight with any tribunal, and the report of the Committee was so inconclusive, that it fell a dead letter as soon as issued. It seems, nevertheless, a subject well worthy of consideration, looking at the great and growing increase of the profession, whether the base of the Academy should not be enlarged, and, retaining the constitution of its governing body, every artist who has attained a true distinction find admission, without limit of numbers, to some share in its honours and privileges.

A part of the profession were hardly satisfied with the result of this first inquiry, and they found sympathy in the public and some warm supporters in the press. Grievances unceasingly repeated gained credence, and at length, upon an address of the House of Commons, a Royal Commission issued, authorized "to inquire into the

present position of the Royal Academy in relation to the Fine Arts, and into the circumstances and conditions under which it occupies a portion of the National Gallery, and to suggest such measures as may be required to render it more useful in promoting Art, and in improving and developing public taste;" and to enable the commissioners to form a sound judgment in these matters they were, in the usual terms, empowered to call before them "persons most competent, by reason of their situation, knowledge, and experience, to afford correct information on the subject of the inquiry." The commission reported in July, 1863, and we reopen this chapter, which was written before the issue of the Report, to offer some brief opinions upon its recommendations. We admit that the Academy is a body peculiarly open to attack. Comprising the most eminent artists of the English school, its numbers are limited and its members self-elective, while, by the ability of the artists elected during now nearly a century, it has given a rank and a prominence in Art to its members which is coveted by the whole profession. At the same time it maintains the most popular and attractive exhibition of the day—exclusion from its walls is oblivion to painters—and, as we have said, space can only be found for one-half the works yearly sent for admission. Hence, it has the honours and emoluments of the profession largely in its keeping at a time when extravagant prices are lavished upon Art. Add to this the Royal patronage and the tenancy of a public building, though these are by no means exclusive to the Royal Academy, and we have abundant elements to stimulate jealous dissensions.

To such conditions may be ascribed many of the

unfair attacks to which the Academy has been subjected —charges of favouritism and exclusiveness in its elections, of the cruel treatment of exhibitors, whose works were unjustly rejected, or, if admitted, hung out of sight; charges of direct corruption in the abuse of the privileges conferred on the Academy, and of the inefficiency of its whole system of control and management, and the consequent injury to Art and artists. These were surely fitting subjects for inquiry, and no one could question the propriety of their reference to a Commission appointed by the Crown. Her Majesty's Commissioners set promptly to work; they called before them the President, who underwent five consecutive days' examination, and twenty other members of the Academy, including the associates; several other artists, some well-known lovers of Art, with two or three more witnesses, whose connection with the inquiry, or special "knowledge and experience" on the subjects in question, are a riddle we cannot solve, and then made their Report. From a body so constituted, we might have looked for some broad, well-considered views of the constitution and character of an institution which is the acknowledged representative of the Art of our country—views which might guide practical men with professional knowledge in framing regulations for the improvement of the Academy—but we look in vain. The recommendations of the Commission, while they would alter the character of the institution in some vital points, are marked by littleness of view, interfere in a host of matters upon which the Commissioners could themselves have no accurate personal knowledge, and were unsupported by any reliable evidence whatsoever.

Let us at the outset relieve the minds of any who

were led to believe that election into the Royal Academy at once deprived an artist of every generous impulse towards the rest of his profession, that he became a selfish oppressor, striving to monopolize all the honours and profits of Art, anxious to keep down the rising merits of others, jealous of all. Such illusions are dispelled by the first page of the Report, which is one of general commendation, quoting and approving the most laudatory opinions which have been expressed in Parliament on the management of the Academy, with the reservation, however, that such laudation is not inconsistent with some serious defects, to remedy which the Commissioners propose considerable changes. They would confer a charter on the Academy to entail public responsibility; they would increase the number of its members and take the control of Art from its professors by adding ten lay members to the governing body; they would deprive the students of the gratuitous teaching which they have enjoyed in the schools of the Academy for nearly a century; they would embarrass the Academy by many crude regulations, interfering with its system of teaching; they would even take upon themselves to regulate the mode of selecting and arranging the pictures for exhibition, founded on principles which are simply absurd when tested by practical experience. They propose to connect with the Academy a class of Art-workmen, and in some cases to admit them as members of a body whose whole aim and teaching is exclusively high Art, overlooking the fact that the Government has established schools specially fitted for Art-education in every branch connected with manufacture and ornamental decoration. These, perhaps, comprise the most important of the numerous recom-

mendations of the Commission, and of these surely the most mischievous is the proposal to add ten laymen (so styled in the Report) to the governing body as a panacea for all the assumed evils of self-election and clique. We do not hesitate to say that such a proposal has never before been made to any professional body, and that it is as humiliating to the whole body of artists as it is opposed not only to their opinions and wishes, but to the whole weight of the evidence given before the Commission by witnesses selected by the Commissioners themselves; and that it has, therefore, no further value or sanction than would be given to the opinions of the majority only of the seven Commissioners, of some of whose notions on this subject the artists were pretty well informed beforehand. It is strange to add that to make this unpalatable scheme acceptable to the Academy, it is to be "accompanied by the boon," we take the very words of the bribe, "of a vast measure of space and a greater fixity of tenure."

We will not enter further into such schemes. When brought before the House of Lords by the President of the Commission in June last (1864), they were unanimously condemned by the highest authorities in the House. We would only add that a lay-body associated with professional men for purely professional duties, can take no real share in their councils and have no just weight in their judgments, and that, to avoid becoming impotent, they would assuredly band themselves together and form a clique—and a very mischievous clique too. Of the recommendations of the Report generally, we should say that the Commissioners have busied themselves with details not properly within the scope of their Commission; that they have, in fact, turned aside from principles to

pursue crude notions, having no practical basis, and have made numerous little meddling recommendations unsupported by the evidence, and on which they could hardly themselves express opinions which would have any weight; that their Report is for these reasons so unpractical that no Minister of the Crown could either advise its adoption as a whole, or eliminate any of its recommendations which might be dealt with separately; and we would point to it as an example and a warning of how non-professional men would undertake to treat professional questions.

We gather from the evidence given before the Commission that the Academy had considered plans, which they were prepared to submit to the Queen, to increase the original number of members of the Academy, and to amend regulations which, by some artists, have been represented as obnoxious. We should be sorry that these reforms should be set aside with the proposals of her Majesty's Commissioners.

CHAPTER IV.

RICHARD WILSON, R.A., AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

Eminent Artists who became Members of the New Academy—General State of Art at the Time—Both Portrait and Landscape—The Smiths of Chichester—Scott—Brooking—Paton—Serres—Richard Wilson, R.A., Portrait Painter, commences his Landscape Career—His Talent unrecognized and unrewarded—True Aim and Principles of his Art—Opinion upon his Choice of Subjects—And upon his great Original Genius—His Materials and Mode of Painting—His Followers, George Barret, R.A., Julius C. Ibbetson,

THE preceding chapter has been devoted to the foundation of the Royal Academy, thenceforth to exercise so great an influence on British Art. At the time of its establishment three great native painters flourished, and already stood high in the public estimation. They each became members of the new academy, and their marked genius had great influence during the period in which they painted, and left an impression on the schools which is only just passing away.

These three eminent men, who commenced a new epoch in Art, are *Richard Wilson*, to whom we shall devote this chapter, *Joshua Reynolds*, and *Thomas Gainsborough*. As the first-named was fifty-four years of age, the second forty-five, and the third forty-one, on the establishment of the Royal Academy, it is evident that neither their merits nor defects may be attributed to its teaching. It affords some insight, too, into the

nature of the patronage of Art at that time in England, that all the three began their career as portrait painters. Wilson lived by his portraits until his thirty-sixth year. Reynolds ended as he began. Gainsborough through life was largely indebted to portraiture for his income, and in the opinion of some of his contemporaries, as of our own, for his fame also. Two other portrait painters, eminent in their day, and considered at the top of their profession, were still in full practice—Hudson and Ramsay. Richardson had just withdrawn into a literary retirement. Of him Walpole says, "that his men want dignity, his women grace," adding—a poor compliment to the artist! —"the good sense of the nation is characterized in his portraits;" and worse still: "full of theory and profound reflections on Art, he drew nothing well below the head, and was void of imagination. His attitudes, draperies, and backgrounds are totally insipid and unmeaning." It may be added that his mantle descended upon his pupil Hudson, who was all his master was, with a dash of insipidity instead of good sense. Ramsay had been appointed the Court painter the year before the foundation of the Royal Academy. His unaffected manly portraits, though their merits do not rise higher, earned him this distinction. In the International Exhibition of 1862, his portrait of the Duke of Argyll contrasted very favourably with the whole-length of Pius VII., considered one of Lawrence's best works; yet hung close to Ramsay's, it appeared by comparison very thin and washy. Hogarth's portraits, as we have said, were truthful and characteristic, but neither his portrait of himself, nor of his benevolent friend, Captain Coram, deserve higher praise as works of Art, and in his female portraiture

grace and refinement are entirely wanting. Mrs. Hogarth's portrait shows her simply as a good wifely person; while Mrs. Doughty's somewhat justifies the story current in the family, that on their complaint of its want of beauty, the painter, in a fit of anger, drew his knife, of which it bears the mark, across his work, and could hardly be so far appeased by the apologies and intercessions of friends as to permit the portrait's being restored. There was then at least room for improvement in portraiture.

We have thought it well to defer till this chapter upon our first great landscape painter, that part of our summary of Art which refers to the condition of landscape painting in England, and its connexion with the epoch we are now approaching.

Landscape painting was slow to receive the impulse given to its more fashionable rival, portraiture. The great change wrought by the genius of Hogarth had not yet extended to landscape. It does not appear that he had himself any particular predilection for it, or that he practised it, further than to paint backgrounds to some few of his pictures. Speaking of *George Lambert*, the scene-painter, (B. 1710, D. 1765,) Walpole says:—"In a country so profusely beautified with the amenities of Nature, it is extraordinary that we have produced so few good painters of landscape." But there seems slight ground for wonder, since up to this period few original painters in any branch of Art had arisen, and as was the case with regard to portrait painting, the little encouragement given to Art, of whatever class, had mostly fallen to the share of foreigners. Lambert imitated Poussin, and though he was esteemed above the

painters of his time, he is only remembered by his scenic reputation, and as the founder of the "Beef-steak Club." Of this day also were *The Smiths of Chichester*, whose well-known names have lived to our own times. These three brothers, William (B. 1707, D. 1764), George, the most distinguished (B. 1714, D. 1766), and John (B. 1717, D. 1764,) shared, in their lifetime, a great reputation, which was spread and sustained by the talented gravers of Woollett, Elliott, Peake, and other artists, who we now regret were not employed upon works of a higher class. The brothers formed a sort of domestic academy. William began in portrait, and later painted landscape as well as fruit and flowers. George and his younger brother John, who died in the prime of life, painted landscape. Fashion patronized them, the critics classed them with Claude and Poussin, of whom they were mere imitators. They painted the sweet scenery surrounding Chichester, seeing Nature only by the borrowed light of these masters, and distorting her homely truths, by attempted classic compositions in their manner. George's works fetched higher prices than Richard Wilson's, and from him he successfully carried away the premium in a competition at the Society of Arts. Though he could claim no influence in the progress of landscape painting, we willingly admit that his works were often pleasing, and possessed merits which might well find admirers among his contemporaries. He is now forgotten, notwithstanding their extravagant praises. Was he more fortunate, who enjoyed such exaggerated favour in his lifetime, or his great rival, whom his countrymen have only just learned to appreciate ?

In marine painting, a branch of the landscape

painter's art, which might have been supposed to appeal most directly to the national tastes, two foreigners, the Vandeveldes, had found much employment under the two last kings of the Stuart family, and had fostered a few pupils and followers. *Peter Monamy* (B. 1670, D. 1749), if not their pupil, was an imitator of their art, which his own has been said to have equalled. His execution is good, and his knowledge of art considerable. He has an excellent traditional method, with little professional artifice. There is a picture by him at Hampton Court (No. 1080), which, though much cracked, is beautifully painted, showing a fine quality of texture, with great precision of touch; the calm plane of the ocean level receding into the extreme distance, without that set scenic effect of passing cloud-shadows, which even the best masters have used to obtain the appearance of recession or distance: this work well deserves notice, and might puzzle the best painters of such subjects to rival. *Samuel Scott* (B. 1710, D. 1772), was another artist of the Vandevelde school, whom Walpole calls "the first painter of his age—one whose works will charm in every age;" adding, "if he was second to Vandevelde in sea-pieces, he excelled him in variety." He was indeed a good draftsman, and painted some tolerable topographical views, as well as marine pieces, but his works do not evince any original treatment; they are now little known or esteemed, and he is remembered chiefly as one of Hogarth's companions, in his jovial water-party to Gravesend, in 1732. *Alexander Brooking* (B. 1720, D. 1759), is another painter of the same class of subjects, who enjoyed considerable reputation. He attained a clear manipulative excellence, with great truth

of delineation, in which he was aided by much knowledge of naval tactics. At Hampton Court Palace, there are some excellent specimens of his art. *Richard Paton* (died 1791), and *William James*, two landscape painters, who flourished about this period, have left works of some excellence, but of little genius—the latter, however, has evidently gone to Nature, in an imitative spirit for his subjects, but has failed to give them more than an antiquarian interest. He was in some respects a follower, if not a pupil, of Canaletti, who came to England about 1746, and stayed here two years. The works and reputation of this Italian had preceded him; the facility and apparent certainty of his execution, and even the mechanical methods of handling displayed in his works, had a charm for those who had been accustomed to the tiresome excellence of the Dutch school, and many of his mechanical modes of imitating Nature were adopted by our landscape painters of this period. Thus we find in the series of subjects on the banks of the Thames by James, that he resorted to ruling for the lines of his buildings, and to the still more mechanically conventional treatment of the ripple in water, as expressed by Canaletti, a treatment also to be found in the works of others. *Dominic Serres, R.A.*, a native of Gascony (B. 1722, D. 1793), was another painter of this class, whose art was acquired here. He was assisted by Brooking, and became much patronized. There are in Hampton Court Palace, four large pictures of the naval review at Portsmouth, painted on a commission from George III. These works are inferior in their executive qualities to those of the painters we have just mentioned, and have none of their purity and precision. Serres seems to have left

the good old traditional modes of painting, allured probably by the richness of Reynolds's works, and those of the academic body who followed him. The result is, that his pictures are a sad wreck; the vehicle cracked all over. We must not, however, confound his works, as has been the case, with those of his son, *John Thomas Serres*, who was the husband of the *soi-disant* Princess Olive of Cumberland, and died in 1825. Painting the same class of subjects, his method of execution was so good that his works show neither hair nor vehicle cracks. His skies are clear and pure, the clouds have been laid on with much impasto, and every touch of the brush left without teasing or repetition.

Such were the men, and such the state of Art in this country, when Richard Wilson, then in his thirty-sixth year, on paying a visit to Zuccarelli, whom he met at Venice, had his eyes opened by the friendly opinions of that painter as to his own landscape powers, and quitted his pursuit of portrait painting at once and for ever; not, perhaps, to his own profit, but, in so doing, to become the first of the great race of landscape painters, who have made English landscape art pre-eminent, and surpassing all the schools of modern Europe. Wilson was born in Montgomeryshire, where his father held a small living, on the 1st of August, 1714. He came to London, and, his biographer says, was at a suitable age placed under one Wright, an obscure painter of portraits, of whom Walpole takes not the least notice; not that it is consequently to be inferred that Wright was unworthy of notice, since Walpole has made many omissions. Wright's works are, however, now entirely unknown. Of Wilson's own portrait art we have only

seen one or two examples, which certainly rather justify the opinion of Edward Edwards, who, while commending Wilson's power of drawing a head, says that his portraits were not marked by any characteristic qualities. Yet a year or two before Wilson went to Italy, he was engaged to paint a whole-length portrait of the future monarch, and of his brother the Duke of York; and we can hardly doubt that in an age of mediocrity, Wilson's delicate eye for colour and gradation, his feeling for breadth and power of generalization, would place him at least on a level with his fellow-painters. At any rate, up to his thirty-sixth year, he found means to live by his portraits, and even to save money for his journey to Italy; while his after-biography shows that his works were beyond the taste of the day, and that with all his talent as a landscape painter, his art only just kept him from absolute want.

The painter whose genius was appreciated at once by Zuccarelli, and whom Vernet generously introduced to the notice of his countrymen, remained six years at Rome; and on his return to his native country found, as was usual, a foreigner in possession of all the patronage. This was Zuccarelli himself, "whose *pleasing* and *elegant* style," Bryan tells, "was greatly admired, not only in Italy but throughout Europe." Zuccarelli came to England in 1752, and was at once full of commissions. His pictures are found everywhere; in the Royal collections alone there are more than twenty of his works, while of Wilson's we find not one. Something of this may be due to his rugged independence; but it is sad to look back on the neglect which awaited him, while such a mere decorative painter as Zuccarelli, whose works are a compound of

facile insipidity and theatrical prettiness, with little Nature and less Art, was constantly employed, and was enabled, after a few years, to return to his own country with abundant means for his old age.

Wright, his biographer, tells us, on the authority of Field, that Wilson's return excited some interest and much criticism in the Art coteries of the time, and that those artists who constituted themselves a self-styled committee of taste, and led the public in Art matters, sat in judgment upon him several times, and came to a resolution that his manner was not suited to the English taste, and that if he hoped for patronage he must change it for the lighter style of Zuccarelli. This they voted should be communicated to him by one of their number—Penny, R.A., then a painter of male portraits and pictures of sentiment. What a different estimate is formed of the two landscape painters at the present time is shown by the sum paid for Wilson's picture of "Apollo and the Seasons," which is said to have been purchased at Rogers' sale for 700 guineas: while there can be little doubt that one of the same size by Zuccarelli would not be likely to realize seventy. There is, however, again an Art coterie of landscape painters rising up, who despise the qualities in which Wilson excelled, as well as the Art of all the painters who have gone before them, assuring us that, twenty years hence, such Art will only be valued as a curious historical record, while the painters of the new school will carry it to a pitch of excellence hardly as yet imagined. Poor Claude! poor Cuyp! poor Poussin and Wilson! one would be inclined to exclaim, were it not that we are reminded of Jervas' admiration of his own copy of a picture by Titian,

when he delightedly exclaimed, "What would little Tit say to this?"

The principles of the disciples of this new school are directly opposed to those of Wilson; they propose to themselves the literal and individual imitation of Nature, and, by the aggregation of details, to produce a work of Art. Wilson sought to represent Nature's general truths as far as the limitations of our Art-language permitted. "The skill and genius of the landscape painter," says Reynolds, "will be displayed in showing the *general effect*," and he adds that genius consists in the power of expressing that which employs the pencil of the artist, so that the power of the *whole* may take possession of the mind, and for a while suspend the consideration of the subordinate beauties or defects. Wilson, and with him the then rising British school, despised petty details, (no doubt carrying their principle too far,) and endeavoured to suppress those commonplace incidents which are to be found in every subject, retaining only such as added to the sentiment of the whole. In this Reynolds, and Gainsborough also were eminently successful; and Wilson's pictures will live with theirs.

Wilson had studied both Poussin and Claude—studied, however, without copying. We do not, therefore, wonder that an eminent critic (the author of *Modern Painters*), who despises much of the art of those painters, should condemn Wilson as corrupted by such study; but, strange to say, he condemns him also as corrupted by the study of *Nature*, because he chose it in the vicinity of the great city where he first found out the bent of his genius. "Had Wilson," he remarks, "studied under favourable circumstances, there

is evidence of his having possessed power enough to produce an original picture; but, corrupted by the study of the Poussins, and gathering his materials in their field—the district about Rome, a district especially unfavourable, as exhibiting no pure or healthy nature, but a diseased and overgrown flora, among half-developed volcanic rocks, loose calcareous concretions, and mouldering wrecks of buildings. . . . his pictures are, in general, mere diluted adaptations from Poussin and Salvator, without the dignity of the one or the fire of the other." Yet how differently, at another time, does this same critic write of this same land, and in what noble language describe the scenery—a picture in itself, as far as words can go, and enough to stimulate any painter to attempt to realize it in his own Art-language. "Perhaps," says he, "there is no more impressive scene on earth than the Campagna of Rome under evening light. Let the reader imagine himself for a moment withdrawn from the sounds and motions of the living world, and sent forth alone into this wild and wasted plain. The earth yields and crumbles beneath his foot, tread he never so lightly, for its substance is white, hollow, and carious, like the dusty wreck of the bones of men. The long knotted grass waves and tosses feebly in the evening wind, and the shadows of its motion shake feverishly along the banks of ruin that lift themselves to the sunlight. Hillocks of mouldering earth heave around him, as if the dead beneath were struggling in their sleep; scattered blocks of black stone—four-square remnants of mighty edifices, not one left upon another, lie upon them to keep them down. A dull purple poisonous haze stretches level along the desert, veiling its spectral wrecks of massy ruins, on whose rents

the red light rests, like dying fires in defiled altars. The blue ridge of the Alban Mount lifts itself against a solemn space of green, clear, quiet sky. Watch-towers of dark clouds stand stedfastly along the promontories of the Apennines. From the plain to the mountain, the shattered aqueducts, pier beyond pier, melt into the darkness, like shadowy and countless troops of funeral mourners, passing from a nation's grave."

After years of toil in our city, where the structures are but mean, although picturesque, Wilson suddenly opened his eyes in this classic land of solemn memories, and strange, wild grandeur. He saw clearly how the fashionable Canaletti had depicted it mechanically and by recipe, and the inane Zuccarelli lowered it to his own feebleness—saw at once how it transcended the subjects and scenery of our former teachers, the Dutch, heretofore the idols of our island painters. Here for six years he patiently laboured to imbibe the spirit of the scenery, to master its grandeur, and to fill his heart with its sublimity. And shall we blame him much if some of his language echoed the voices of those who had laboured in the same field, and had been, if but imperfectly, lighted with the same glories? Certainly there is this praise due to our countryman; that our Landscape Art, which had heretofore been derived from the meaner school of Holland, following his great example, looked thenceforth to Italy for its inspiration; that he proved the power of native Art to compete, on this ground also, with the Art of the foreigner, and prepared the way for the coming men who, embracing Nature as their mistress, were prepared to leave all and follow her.

In treating of Wilson's art we must regard it not

only for its own intrinsic excellence, but also in comparison with the Art of his time. If his landscapes are what are called "compositions," rather than simply imitative or portrait scenes, such was considered the highest Art in his day. How nobly he composed his pictures is shown not only by their natural impression of truth and grandeur, but by comparison with the feeble works of his competitors. Nor will the painter who understands his art ever forego such composition or arrangement of the parts as shall produce the most agreeable lines, the best accidents or contrasts of light and dark or colour, hiding or suppressing, by these accidents or contrasts, the mean and the ignoble, so as to bring into due importance all those points which, having been strongly impressed on the painter, are likely as strongly to impress the spectator.

We have spoken of Wilson's treatment of landscape as "general" rather than individual, feeling assured that no term of Art, as we have already said, is better understood than the term "generalization." By this a painter, without superseding one iota of drawing or character, may convey a simpler, truer, and higher impression of Nature than by the most minutely-detailed imitation. The eyes of all men differ in the power of seeing details; and, to the most gifted, absolute detailed imitation would require the highest microscopic powers to achieve. In many states of atmosphere all details are absorbed, as in the finest sunsets, and in all deep shadows out of doors in the blaze of a sunlighted day. Moreover the artist has to represent on a few inches of paper, or, at most, a few feet of canvas, a foreground where all the objects should be treated with distinctness, a middle distance extended, it may be, over miles of

woodland, pasture, or corn, passing away in the far horizon into hills and downs, which in their turn melt into the clouds themselves, or into the unclouded sky. Does not, then, the very scale of his works imply generalization, which, be it remembered, does not mean an attempt to fuse the specific character of any two or more objects into one, but the omission of those details the representation of which, small in themselves, becomes mean or absolutely impossible on the reduced scale of the picture? Such, for instance, as treating the masses of leaves forming the bough rather than attempting the individual leaves. As the tree recedes into the distance the painter must do it; nay, must finally give the mass of the tree instead of the details of the bough. So also the coats of animals, as sheep for instance; when near, we see and may paint the locks of wool; and who shall say but the painter (who knows how best to express his subject) when he may merge those locks of wool into the simple, warm mass of colour which shall represent the whole? No one will doubt that he who has thoroughly studied the details of the form will give the general impression of it more truly from that study; but mean and literal imitation certainly degrades Art, as much as simple, broad, and general treatment ennobles it. Another fine quality in Wilson's art was the manliness and ease of the handling. The work looks as if he loved it for its own sake, and had moreover the most perfect mastery of his materials. These are qualities which all can appreciate.

In view of the sad failure of many of our English pictures, it would be highly interesting to know what vehicles and pigments had been used by the artist, and what was

the conduct of his work. How instructive it would be had this been written on the pictures at the time of their execution; we should now be able to reject pigments and vehicles we have retained and to revive others we have neglected, simply from seeing how particular methods had stood the test of time. In this the worst painters might teach us equally with the best. How greatly it is to be desired that this practice should at once be adopted. By good fortune, we possess indirectly, through Farington, R.A., Wilson's pupil, the mode of painting which his master followed, with an account of his palette and vehicle, and are enabled to test their durability by the present state of his paintings. "Respecting the palette and process adopted by Wilson, Wright, his biographer, says, Some particulars have been communicated to me by a friend, derived, as he tells me, from a very authentic source. According to this statement, the colours used by Wilson were white, Naples yellow, vermilion, light ochre, brown ochre, dark or Roman ochre, lake, yellow lake, lampblack, Prussian blue, ultramarine, burnt sienna. Wilson dead-coloured in a very broad, simple manner, giving a faint idea of the effect and colour intended, but without any very bright light or strong dark; quite flat and no handling whatever; the shadows in the foreground thin and clear, air-tint prevailing. When perfectly dry, he went over it a second time, heightening every part with colour and deepening the shadows, but still brown, free, loose, and flat, and left in a state for finishing, the half-tints laid in without high-lights. The third time he altered what was necessary in the masses of tint, adding all the necessary sharpness and handling to the different objects, and then giving the finish to his

picture. His great care was to bring all the parts of his picture together, and not to finish one part before another, so that his pictures should not, as the painters term it, run away with him, and that while working in one part he should introduce that colour into other parts where it suited, or lower the tone to make it suit, that the different parts might keep company with each other. His air-tint was blue, burnt ochre, and light red, sometimes a little vermilion; in other cases, he made his air-tints of the lakes and blue; with the lakes he made his glazing tints on the foreground very rich and warm, and of their full force; but all this was moderated by tints which he laid on the glazings. If any part was hard, he restored it, by scumbling the air-tint suited to the distance of the part, over it, and then added the finishing touches and sharpness to prevent its being smoky or mealy. A magylph of linseed-oil and mastic varnish, in which the latter predominated, was his usual vehicle, and an oyster-shell served him to contain it. He dead-coloured with Prussian blue, but always finished his sky with ultramarine; for it was his opinion that no other blue could give the beautiful effect of air."

If we look to Wilson's pictures to test the success of the process, we find that all the solid parts in which little vehicle has been used have stood well and firmly; that the greens, probably from the use of yellow lake, have faded, and that all the darks have grown much darker than originally painted; and, from the too free use of mastic-magylph, have become very much cracked. This is the case especially in Wilson's more laboured works, as in the "Niobe" and the "Macænas' Villa" in the National Gallery; less so in the "Apollo and the

Seasons," while the "River Dee," belonging to the Marquis of Westminster, which is rapidly and solidly painted, has no cracks except two arising from injuries on the sky.

Wilson was not one of fortune's favourites. His life was a long struggle. He managed only to live, for the last four or five years preceding his retirement, by the help he received as librarian of the Royal Academy. He is represented as a rough diamond, yet he was a man of much classic taste, an accomplished scholar, and, when not suffering under a morbid depression of spirits, courteous in his address and brilliant in his conversation. We are told that he considered fifteen guineas a good price for a three-quarter landscape, yet, even at this mean sum, he found few purchasers, and one day, in a tone of despair or indignation, he asked Barry, R.A., who was much of his own stamp, if he knew any one mad enough to employ a landscape-painter, and, if so, would he recommend him; he had then literally nothing to do, and at this time, though advanced in years, he was in the full possession of his powers. It is pleasant to add that when his health was gradually declining, he was enabled to retire to Llanberris, where he had succeeded to a small property on the death of his brother. There he died suddenly in May, 1782. He had passed many years of his life in the house No. 36, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, the corner of North Street, where at that time there were no houses to impede his view of the clear country beyond. We ourselves remember the erection of a large part of Fitzroy Square. Wilson took a lease of the above house because of the view it afforded of the country away to Hampstead, and the sun declining in the west. He was accustomed of a fine evening to throw open the window,

and invite his friends to enjoy with him the glowing sunsets behind the Hampstead and Highgate hills. He and Marlowe, the water-colour painter, used to sketch the old elms in front of Marylebone Gardens, the Vauxhall of the northern district, now entirely blotted out and forgotten. Woollett, the engraver, subsequently lived in the same house; two arched windows, long since bricked up, but which then looked towards the north, were the painter's show-room and painting-room, and out of the upper one we may fancy him, with his shaved head and tasselled cap, looking from time to time from under his shading hand to refresh his eye with light—a practice, we are told, that he continually followed.

Dr. Wolcott (Peter Pindar) said, "It is worthy of observation that none of Wilson's pupils caught the manner of their master, and yet a school has arisen, which strongly partakes of it, of which the drawings of my early acquaintance, the generous and giddy Tom Girtin, is an instance." *George Barret, R.A.*, the landscape painter, is, however, a more prominent instance. He was born near Dublin, in 1728, and was probably the son of parents in humble circumstances, since he commenced life as a colourer of prints for a Dublin publisher, having had some previous instruction in drawing at West's academy, in that city. Introduced to Edmund Burke, a man so well qualified to direct the course of the young artist, he was advised to turn his attention to landscape painting, and to study diligently from Nature. The locality of the Irish metropolis offers ample opportunities for such study. The city, with many noble buildings, gradually merges into garden-like suburbs, sloping away to the lonely shores of the distant

bay, and the wild country at the foot of the Wicklow hills. Within reach of the pedestrian artist is the fine park through which the Dargle, a foaming torrent, forces its way amid rocky ravines and wooded dells, giving opportunities for study of the most varied character and unnumbered subjects for the painter. We may presume that it was from such material the picture was painted which won Barret the premium of 50*l.*, offered by the Royal Dublin Society, and a wide reputation in his native city.

In 1761 or 1762, Barret left Ireland, in order to improve his art and his fortune in London. He brought with him two pictures which he had painted for his Irish patron, Lord Powerscourt, and sent them to the Exhibition in Spring Gardens. Here they were greatly admired, and the artist so praised, that his reputation was at once established; and lucrative employment flowed in upon him. In 1764 he was again successful in a competition for a premium of 50*l.*, the first of its kind, offered by the Society of Arts for the best landscape. Barry, R.A., in a letter to Dr. Sleigh, characteristically undated, but most probably written in 1765, says:—"My friend and countryman, Barret, does no small honour to landscape painting amongst us; I have seen nothing to match his last year's premium-picture. It has discovered to me a very great want in the aërial part of my favourite Claude's performances. You know his skies are clear and uniform, without object, except now and then a small cloud skirting in his horizon or zenith; while Barret presents you with such a glorious assemblage as I have sometimes seen amongst high mountains, rising into unusual agreeable appear-

ances, whilst the early beams of the sun sport themselves, if you will allow the expression, through the vast arcades, and sometimes glance on a remote farmhouse, or a great lake, whose ascending vapours spread themselves like a veil over the distance. Claude's admirers affirm, in his vindication, his want of masses in the clouds, &c., to be owing to the clearness and undisturbed serenity of the air of Italy, where he studied." It appears strange that Claude's art should have been thought to need *vindication* against such a painter as Barret, but such is fashion and popularity. Here was a young man, barely thirty-two years of age, who had probably not painted a dozen pictures in his lifetime, praised and patronized, receiving large sums for his works, whilst Richard Wilson, a veteran in Art, in the full prime of his powers, could hardly exist by the sale of his landscapes. It is said that Lord Dalkeith paid young Barret 1,500*l.* for three pictures, a very large sum in those days, and that commissions flowed in upon him. Constant employment induced facility, and facility its usual concomitant; his pictures became less thoughtful than heretofore, and more remarkable for ease of execution than for truth to Nature. Burke, writing to Barry, seems to allude to this change in Barret, who, he says, "is now on a night-piece, which is indeed noble in conception, and in the execution of the very first merit. When I say he does not improve, I do not mean to say that he is not the first we have in that way, but that his capacity ought to have carried him to equal any that ever painted landscape."

Among the patrons of Art of that day was the Rev. John Lock, who resided at Norbury, in Surrey. The

house is situated on the summit of a hill, in the midst of a park, and commands a noble view both up and down the valley. On the slopes of the hill are giant trees, oak, and ash, and beeches, together with a grove of ancient yews, existing before the Conquest, which may have sheltered the dark rites of the pagan Druids. Around the base of the hill flows the curious river Mole, now in broad pools, reflecting the southern sky; now fringed with beech and alder, and anon contracted between steep banks of chalk, or, as its name imports, diving under ground, and swallowed up awhile, to re-appear in renewed freshness, shining like a mirror in the green landscape. Distant hills close in the valley, which, whether in the grassy spring, or golden autumn, teems with luxuriance, while, in the far distance, a wilder and more rugged country gives contrast to the scene. Such a country must ever be a paradise to the landscape painter. Mr. Lock loved Art, and loved to have the company of painters in his country home, and Barret, now one of the forty R.A.'s, was one of those who were frequent visitors in the happy valley.

We may presume that when the thoughts of the artists were so intent upon monumental works, and the project of the decoration of St. Paul's was under consideration, the subject was often discussed at Norbury; and when the scheme ended in disappointment, and Barry undertook the great room at the Society of Arts, Mr. Lock bethought himself of having one of the principal rooms at Norbury decorated with landscape-painting. He commissioned Barret to paint the walls from the skirting to the ceiling, with a series of scenes. This work differed from Barry's pictures at the Adelphi,

in being painted in oil on the actual surface of the wall. It is still in existence, and, after some recent cleaning and repairs, seems to have stood well, and to retain much of its first brilliancy. It is rather a masterly specimen of scenic decoration, but has little of the finesse of true landscape painting; indeed, this was hardly to be expected. Either the fashion for such works had passed away, or the wealthy patrons of that day were too much inclined to change and reconstruction to expend large sums on works that must be sacrificed on any alteration of their houses; certain it is, that the example found no important imitators, until, in the next century, the idea was revived on the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament.

Barret's pictures are painted with the firm pencil and vigorous once-ness which characterize the works of the best painters of his time; they are often "compositions," with the painter's trees, the regulation rocks and water, of the followers of Poussin. But while we admire, at times, the ease and dexterity of their solid execution, and the agreeable lines of the general arrangement, his pictures do not touch us, since they are the offspring more of rule than of feeling, and are memories of other men's works, rather than derived from the painter's own observation of Nature. Sawrey Gilpin, the animal-painter, occasionally added the figures and cattle to his landscapes. Barret's works were sought after and eagerly purchased; he was in the receipt of 2,000*l.* a year from his profession, yet such was his extravagance that he was in frequent difficulties. Towards the close of his life, his friend Burke procured him the appointment of master-painter at Chelsea Hospital, but at his death he

nevertheless left his wife and family dependent upon the bounty of the Royal Academy. He died at Paddington, 29th May, 1784. He, like the Smiths of Chichester, was the favourite of the hour, yet the genius of poor Wilson revolted against the public judgment. He had always a clear and confident presentiment that posterity would do him justice, and he told Burke that he would live to see the time when Barret's pictures would fetch nothing, while great prices would be given for his own; a prediction which, if not fulfilled in Burke's day, has assuredly been in ours.

We must mention yet one more painter of the same school, *Julius C. Ibbetson* (B. 1759, D. 1817), who, if coming later on the stage, was not the less inspired in his art by Wilson. His works possess considerable merit. His manner was clear and firm, powerful, but occasionally hard; his palette was simple, his colouring subdued but having a tendency to a clayey hue, his landscapes pleasing, with figures and cattle well introduced. But his pictures did not find purchasers. He was one of the jolly friends of George Morland; like him he lived from hand to mouth, was employed by an inferior class of picture-dealers, and made them his pot companions.

CHAPTER V.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, P.R.A.

His Early Education—Bent upon the Pursuit of Art—Greatly Gifted for this by Nature—Becomes the Pupil of Hudson—Fortunately soon quits his Teaching—After some practice in Devonshire he visits Italy—His First Impressions of Italian Art—The Source of his Future Inspiration—Correggio and Titian—Attempts to Imitate the Colour of the Venetians—But Nature his True School—Untrammelled by Tradition—His Strivings after Excellence—Commences Practice in London—Is soon distinguished—But not Patronized by the Court—Walpole compares him disparagingly with Ramsay, the Court Painter—Sketch for the Royal Marriage—Reynolds's Historical Paintings, Macbeth, Cardinal Beaufort, Ugolino—The Nativity—Opinion upon these Works—His Manner of Painting—Effect upon our School—His Fugitive Colours—Causes of the Failure of his Pictures—Recollections of his Modes of Painting—Their Defects—Use of Bitumen and of Wax Mediums—Reynolds' Literary Abilities—Friendship with Dr. Johnson—Writings and Discourses at the Royal Academy—Their True Aim—And Instructive Value—His earnest Love of Art—Manner of Life—Literary Associates—Amiable Temper—Chosen the first President of the Royal Academy—Successful Life—Attacked by Paralysis—Death.

JOSHUA REYNOLDS, born at Plympton on the 15th July, 1723, the year Kneller died, is the next of the trio who represent the new epoch in Art. Unlike Wilson and, as we shall see, Gainsborough, Sir Joshua excelled only in portraits. The son of a clergyman, who sought to add to his income by keeping a school, young Reynolds was in a position to obtain knowledge, and as his father originally intended him to practise physic, we may presume that he endeavoured to ground him in the learning essential for that profession. If he never made great

progress, his after-life proved that what he did acquire was a great help in the composition of his discourses.

Reynolds told Northcote, his pupil and biographer, that had he chosen to become a physician, he should have excelled in that profession as in Art, and though Dr. Johnson held similar opinions, they may well be doubted. Men are fitted by Nature for particular pursuits, and those peculiarly so fitted advance with ease to a point which no amount of study will enable others, not so gifted, to achieve. Thus science has proved to us that some who see well in other respects, are perfectly blind to distinguish certain colours,—how could such attain eminence as colourists? In the same way some have no sense of tune or the relation of musical notes; some no perception of the more delicate gradations of form and proportion. Could these become eminent musicians, or refined draftsmen, even were they men of the highest mental culture? Others are finely gifted in these respects, sensitive to touch, dexterous, skilful manipulators, while some possessing great mental powers are essentially awkward and clumsy. Such was Johnson himself. Could he have become a skilful surgeon? and such in a degree was Sir Joshua, whose pictures are most deficient in that quality which painters call careful execution. It is not too much to say, however, that Nature intended Reynolds for a painter, and if she denied him form and delicate execution, she endowed him with such a fine sense of colour, tone, breadth, as well as of character and beauty, as qualified him to gain a world-wide fame in the pursuit of Art. He might have made a most respectable, dignified, and perhaps popular physician, but it was only as a painter that he could

have won his way to the front rank among the men of his age.

Reynolds' father seems in the outset to have satisfied himself that his son's bent for Art was too decided to be opposed, and to have determined to let him follow his own inclinations. In a county so remote at that time from the metropolis as Devonshire, it is not to be supposed that Reynolds could find much instruction in the Art he adopted. Malone tells us that he copied such prints and drawings as fell in his way, and that in his mere boyhood he studied the "Jesuit's Perspective" to such purpose that he was able to astonish his father by a drawing of Plympton Grammar School; but little real study of Art could be thus obtained, and we may presume that in 1741, when on St. Luke's day, being then about nineteen years of age, Reynolds was placed under Thomas Hudson, he had had small practice in drawing. Portrait painting at that time was more a trade than an Art, and so long as the artists could paint a head all the rest was added for them. We may, therefore, be sure that during the two years Reynolds continued with Hudson, his practice of drawing was very desultory, and that his master was not likely to lay much stress on studies which he had neither followed himself nor acknowledged the want of in his practice. We have no record that Reynolds had any training in the St. Martin's Lane Academy, and it is most probable that he returned to his native county and commenced practice there, without having acquired much more than a little face-painting by his two years' sojourn in the metropolis. He says himself, "Not having the advantage of an early academical education, I never had the facility of drawing the naked figure which an

artist ought to have. It appeared to me too late, when I went to Italy and began to feel my own deficiencies, to endeavour to acquire that readiness of invention which I observed others to possess." Constable, R.A., used to say, and the remark is pertinent to Reynolds, that Art being mechanical as well as intellectual, there never was a boy-painter, intending to imply that the mere training of the hand so as to attain its perfect mastery and command is a work of such time, independent of all intellectual qualifications, that boyhood passes away before it is achieved, and as Reynolds' boyhood passed away without this necessary study, he had all his life to lament his deficiencies as a draftsman.

Many circumstances render it fortunate for Art that Reynolds stayed but a short time with his master, and it is probably even a gain to Art that he did not study in the St. Martin's Lane Academy. That school was the centre of a knot of incapables, as Hogarth has sufficiently shown us; while Hudson himself, as to any real knowledge of Art, inherited but the dregs of Lely and Kneller's traditions, handed down through his master Richardson. The execution of the painters' art of that day consisted of the most common-place, dry, and tame handling, which even Hogarth, with his contempt of schools and academies, of laws and rules, hardly broke loose from, and yet it wanted some complete breaking-up of the recipe conditions, some departure in a totally new direction, to give a fair chance for the development of any originality in this respect. Mr. Joshua Reynolds Gwatkin, a descendant of the great President, has a portrait of the painter painted by himself, when about twenty-one years of age, either during the time he was with Hudson,

or just after his return to Devonshire. This early work shows a curious similarity to Hudson's painting, both in its texture of surface and mode of execution—dry, poor, and painty, like the other works of the time—it has not suffered from vehicle-cracks, but is simply hair-cracked from an over-dry ground, while the coat, both in colour and execution, has an affinity to the draperies of that time. Had Reynolds remained long with this fashionable painter, it is possible to suppose that he might have settled down, as far as mechanical execution goes, into the common-place manner of his master and his contemporaries. He says himself, "We all know how often those masters who sought after colouring changed their manner; whilst others, merely from not seeing various modes, acquiesced all their lives in that with which they set out;" but thrown upon his own resources, and finding fortunately an early opportunity to visit Italy and Venice, he was in the best condition to profit by the great works he had then the means of studying.

This opportunity Reynolds owed to the kindness of Captain Keppel, in whose ship he sailed for the Mediterranean, in the month of May, 1749, when about twenty-six years of age. Since leaving London and the tutelage of Hudson he had spent five years in practising his profession in Devonshire, it is presumed, with some pecuniary success. The study of Nature is the greatest source of improvement to an artist; and portrait painting is, or ought to be, a constant study of Nature. The study of Art had been hitherto denied him; but Reynolds owned that the works of William Gandy, an artist of Exeter, and a painter of much merit, made great impression on him at that period of his life.

Imagine, then, a young artist, thus slightly grounded, yet full of enthusiasm for his profession, arriving at the great metropolis of Art; not passing to it through the cities on the way, each with its painters of renown, each with its gallery of Art treasures; but landed at once from a country where such treasures were then scarce, sealed, and hidden; landed at once in the mother city of Art, where everything was open to his study, and wonders courted his inspection. Is it surprising that at first he was unconscious of the great qualities of these Art treasures, so totally different from all he had heard called Art; different even in the medium in which they were executed, having a totally different aim to all that was praised by the learned, or practised by the patronized at home. He felt disappointed, and had the candour to allow that he was so. It is difficult to go back a century in Art to what it was when Richardson (who wrote so well, but painted only so respectably,) was at the head of portraiture, and Thornhill (the Raphael of St. Paul's and Greenwich) was considered "pre-eminent in the line of Art he pursued;" when Verrio's gaudy staircases and halls (in the first freshness of their production, and when dirt and smoke and oft-repeated varnish had not improved by obscuring their beauties,) led the way to the galleries of the "black masters," which our tourists brought home from Naples and Bologna. It is difficult to put ourselves in the position of one who had heard these works lauded as masterpieces, and had seen the representations by Lely and Kneller of the owners of such works, enshrined as far greater than the pictures of their forerunner Vandyke, and then suddenly found himself in the presence of the grave and solemn proprieties of Raphael, and the grand

dreams of Michael Angelo, painted in the dry and austere medium of fresco, without the allurements of colour, or the blander amenities of oil. Thus placed, should we be more satisfied than Reynolds, or rather should we not be less honest and straightforward?

What a subject of deep interest is the influence the various Italian schools had on the practice of Reynolds. It is clear that up to his time all the traditions of portrait Art in this country had, for more than two centuries, been derived from the Flemings; and that, worn out and used up as these traditions had become, Reynolds had been educated in their belief. Gainsborough, with all his originality, still owned descent from Vandyke, not lineally, but holding from him as a common ancestor. From the date of this voyage, however, Reynolds looked for his inspiration to the great masters of Italy; but from which of them was this inspiration mostly derived? If we take his own testimony in his various writings and discourses, we should reply, from Michael Angelo, who was always the theme of his praise. Of him he wrote to his friends at home—of him he discoursed to the students of the Royal Academy, and his last words uttered in that place were, as he had himself desired, the name of Michael Angelo. Yet if we search the works of Reynolds, it is difficult exactly to trace his obligations to the great Florentine, although a certain massive simplicity in some of his heads, and the largeness of manner that looked to the whole and despised details, may be attributed, perhaps, to his studies in the Sistine Chapel. Next to Michael Angelo, there was no name he so venerated as that of Raphael. It is true that at first he did not understand the merits of the great painter, and only

slowly learnt to love him. He says that he was "disappointed and mortified at not finding himself enraptured with the paintings by Raphael;" that nevertheless he proceeded to copy some of those excellent works. "I viewed them," says he, "again and again; I even affected to feel their merits and to admire them more than I really did. In a short time new perceptions began to dawn upon me, and I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of Art." Yet love that is learnt is very different from love that is spontaneous, and has more in it of duty than of passion; and Raphael made little apparent impression on the Art of Reynolds.

What was he doing, then, during his stay of over two years in the Roman capital? He tells us that he avoided all engagements for copying, which he considered as so much time lost; but he also tells us that he did copy "The Titian" in the Colonna Palace, the "School of Athens," and the "St. Michael" of Guido. These, therefore, he must have copied for his own improvement. Again we hear from his biographer, of many studies of heads from the works of Raphael, made to assist him in his future practice in respect to simplicity, dignity, character, and drawing. The rest of his time, no doubt, was filled up with the practice of his profession, on which he must have depended for support. But it is curious that he remained so long without visiting those other cities of Italy, famed for their schools, and for the master-pieces of Art they contained; and the works of whose painters were to influence his future practice far more than the histories of the Vatican. There is no doubt that the bent of his Art was towards colour; that

all that pertained to colour and chiaroscuro came to him naturally, and with ease; while, as he has truly told us, other qualities had to be appreciated only after much study, if at all. Propriety of action, dignified simplicity, and all those compositions in which he afterwards excelled, which arise from simply seizing what Nature everywhere presents to us, he might learn from Raphael, but the end and object of his life was to add to these, Venetian colouring. Northcote says: "Some attempts may be discovered in his practice to imitate Michael Angelo, and more to imitate Correggio; but it is evident that his whole life was devoted to finding out the Venetian mode of colouring, in the pursuit of which he risked both fortune and fame."

He told Northcote that "he did not believe there ever would be in the world a superior portrait painter to Titian. That to procure a really fine portrait by Titian, he would be content to sell everything he possessed," adding, "I would be content to ruin myself," and for this he gives a reason far more worthy than the search into mere methods of execution. "If," says he, "I had never seen any of the fine works of Correggio, I should never, perhaps, have remarked in Nature the expression which I find in one of his pieces; or if I had remarked it, I might have thought it too difficult, or perhaps impossible to execute;" this shows that Venice and Parma were the sources of his inspiration. Yet how short was his stay in any of the cities north of Rome. In Florence about two months, in Bologna and Parma only a few days, in Venice six weeks—sufficient, however, to impress him with an unending desire to excel in the field thus opened to his view. Henceforth

he forsook the silvery freshness of Vandyke and the Flemings, the rosy brightness of Rubens, and sought after the golden tones of Titian and Giorgione. If "Vandyke painted with sun in his room," it was the sun shining through an atmosphere dimmed with mists and vapours; Reynolds desired rather to do as Titian had done before him, to paint in a light such as the summer sun sheds when he descends with glowing rays into the golden west.

This was why he was ever trying new pigments and new vehicles—carmine, orpiment, and the golden relics of the mummy, oils and varnishes, wax, amber, and resins, enriching his cold paintings by every art of scumbling and glazing. And wonderful indeed are some of the qualities he achieved; lustrous, glowing incarnations of beauty. Yet unlike his great prototype, in this, that what Titian painted he wrought with certainty and principle, making one work—as far as the executive process, equal to another, enduring in their richness to our own day—whilst the works of Reynolds were, alas! but experiments, always giving or leaving glimpses of rare beauties, but too often fading ere the colours on the canvas were dry.

To Reynolds's study of Correggio we are indebted for some of his loveliest and most charming pictures, since there can be little doubt that many of his infantile subjects are deeply imbued with the feeling of that master, even the attitude in some cases reminding us of Correggio. Such is the child in the "Holy Family," and in the "Nymph and Cupid;" while the archness of his children's heads, arising from the peculiar drawing of the eyebrows, seems to be derived from the same source.

Much, also, of the impasto of his execution is due to the study of that painter. But better far than any direct borrowing is the manner in which he followed both Raphael and Correggio in borrowing from Nature. Many of his best fancy pictures arose from his readiness in seizing the promptings and inspiration she placed before him. This we often find recorded both as to his subject-pictures and his portraits. A child sitting to him falls asleep. "Tired, tired; I am very tired, sir," was the little plaintive cry that Northcote heard as he painted in the next room. Perhaps this was the very child that, sleeping, suggested one of the children in the "Babes in the Wood." Turning in its sleep, the group was completed with an *abandon* and truth that could hardly be so well achieved as by the wearied pose of the little model. Another child, pleased with the painter's properties, suggests the principal figure in the "Infant Academy." Of his seizing a passing action we have one or two other remarkable instances. Thus we learn that when he was about to paint Mrs. Siddons as the "Tragic Muse," he requested her to seat herself in a suitable pose; but that having commenced, on her turning round to look at something on the wall, the new action struck him as more characteristic; he asked her to retain it, and we see how effective he made it in this the noblest portrait from his hand. Again, John Hunter the surgeon was sitting to him for the first time, and Sir Joshua had been making a series of ineffectual beginnings, when Hunter, in a fit of abstraction, took the highly characteristic attitude in which he is painted. How happily Reynolds adopted what might appear to others commonplace incidents is seen in the playful mother and child, the "Duchess of

Devonshire and her Infant," and in the "Pick-a-back," the property of Lord Monson, with hosts of other examples that all will readily call to mind. How fortunate he was in seizing quaint attitudes is instanced in Lord Althorp with his hands in his pockets, Master Bunbury as Harry VIII., or that prim little bundle in a mob cap, Penelope Boothby.

Reynolds was, as we have shown, when he started for Italy, a free man, untrammelled by rules or practice, and happily fitted to choose his own methods and to run a free career. That he did so all his pictures bear witness. They are, as he tells us himself, a series of experiments. These proved sometimes unfortunate for the possessors of the work, sometimes for his own reputation, but always gave evidence of a zealous search after new colour and new executive processes. Aiming at new beauties he often achieved present success, and always left a legacy to his brother artists, a treasury of examples and warnings. To us they have borne good fruit, in that, like him, we have not rested satisfied with mere commonplace methods of painting, as until very lately has been the case in the modern schools of Germany and France; but studying, as he did, the works of the great Venetians and Flemings, and even of the Dutch schools, for the very varied execution with which they represent the facts of Nature, we have escaped from mechanical monotony, and have produced, as far as handling and execution goes, as many varied manners as there are individual painters.

And this we owe to Reynolds. Great was the abuse heaped upon him for indiscriminate use of fugitive colours and fading vehicles, even in his own day, but it turned

him not aside. From Lely's time until Reynolds, flesh-painting was little better than house-painting, wholly mechanical and commonplace. The pallet, arranged according to rule, with a recipe set of tints, served equally for all complexions. Vermilion and ochre, blue-black and Indian red, had to do duty for the young and the old, the fair and the dark—a little more of the grey or of the white constituting the only difference. The same laboured handling, made still more smooth and insipid by the use of the *sweetener*, resulted, in all cases, in the same tame and textureless surface. Well might Lady Pentweazle, as she passed down the gallery of Mr. Carmine, say of his works, "Likely, and indeed all alike!" for it would puzzle even skilled eyes, on looking at a range of these characterless inanities, to tell in what one man's ancestors differed from another; since, when the face-painter had concluded his share of the work, it was fitted by the journeyman drapery-painter with a figure from the mannikin, with wooden hands, and pattern vestments. Merely as a flesh-painter, what a change was wrought by Reynolds! He early saw the lovely complexions of the women of our land—so fair, yet so varied in their fairness that no two but have their fairness with a difference; the hue of the mantling cheek changing with every lively thought or passing fancy; colour ebbing and flowing with each new passion or deepening feeling — complexions that make our countrywomen out-paragon the world. And then the children whom he loved to paint — less mortals than angels, mottled with health like roses dipped in milk. Well might he say, when urged to paint such flesh with the accustomed ver-

milion, as being less fugitive than his carmines, "I see no vermilion here."

On Reynolds's return from Italy in 1753, he spent three months in his native county, and, on his arrival in London, set up his easel in St. Martin's Lane, then the haunt of Art and artists, as was the neighbourhood of Newman Street afterwards, until the extension of the town caused their migration further northward and westward. His early friend Lord Mount-Edgecumbe soon recommended sitters to the young artist's studio, and with these and the connexion he had made in Italy, he formed an extensive practice, so much so that during the year 1755 we find engagements with no less than one hundred and twenty-five sitters, including many persons of rank, and others distinguished by their literary, political, or social eminence. Reynolds made acquaintance with Johnson very soon after his return to London, and the two remained fast friends for life; the doctor being indebted to the painter for many acts of kindness, and, in return, abstaining, more than was his wont, from those fierce attacks which others encountered at his hands. As his sitters increased in number and importance, Reynolds removed first to Newport Street, and afterwards purchased the house No. 47 in Leicester Square, or, as it was then called, Leicester Fields; here he built himself a studio and reception-rooms, and in this studio—now an auction-room—he painted during the remainder of his life. It so happened that the majority of Reynolds's friends belonged to the Opposition side in politics, and, whether from this or other causes, he was little employed by the Court. He painted the Duke of Cumberland in 1759, and shortly after the Prince of

Wales, afterwards George III., but in 1762, on a vacancy in the office, he had the mortification of seeing Ramsay appointed Court painter, an artist of little originality, though of great respectability. Reynolds, who was, and continued, friendly with him until his death, was accustomed to speak of Ramsay as "a sensible man, but not a good painter."

When Reynolds was solicited to hold the office of President of the newly-founded Royal Academy, he objected that he was not appreciated at Court, and that their Majesties had never sat to him as to other painters. Mr. T. Taylor (*Life of Reynolds*) quotes a letter from J. Sharpe to Garrick, written in 1769, which says:—"Sir Joshua has made it a condition of his acceptance of the Presidentship, that he should be allowed to paint the King and Queen"—and the King, we are then told, promised to sit to him. Mr. Taylor adds, under the date 1771, "he seems to have been working at the pictures this year;" and again: "It is true that this very year (1771) he was painting the King and the Queen," as well as Alderman Baker and the Lady Mayoress (persons at that time in strong opposition to the Court). Yet Cotton expressly tells us that "the King and the Queen honoured Reynolds by sitting for their portraits this year (1779) at his particular request, for the Council-room at the Royal Academy. His Majesty, who was an early riser, sat at ten in the morning." And further, Cotton says, "In his (Reynolds's) diary—'Friday, May 21st, at ten, the King.' The Queen's name does not occur until December. These were, I believe, the only portraits of their Majesties painted by Reynolds."

This may be literally true, for though the King had sat to Reynolds in 1757, he was then only Prince of Wales. It would seem, however, that from this early work, Reynolds had expected employment at Court, more especially when we connect it with the sketch of the Marriage of their Majesties, now in the Royal collection at Windsor, if this work is rightly attributed to him. This sketch is not mentioned in any of the diaries we have seen nor by his biographers, yet it seems very like in its execution to the paraphrase of the School of Athens, which Reynolds painted while in Rome, with portraits of friends then in Italy. The marriage sketch is on a half-length canvas, landscape way, and the figures, which are extremely sketchy, are about fourteen inches high. The King in front of the altar is giving his hand to the Queen; two bishops are within the altar rails, with small groups of the lords and ladies of the Court on either side. It appears from this that Reynolds hoped or was led to expect a commission to paint the ceremony. We know that at the time he painted a whole length of Lady E. Keppel as one of the bridesmaids, as also Sir Septimus Robinson, Usher of the Black Rod. Were these portraits painted partly with a view to the more extensive work? Mr. Taylor gives the list of the sitters in September, 1761. He also gives the date of the ceremony, September the 2nd (Burke and Lodge both say September the 8th); but there is no allusion to any engagement for the painter to be present at the marriage. Did any cause of offence arise here, in that Reynolds was asked to prepare a sketch which was rejected?

Between Ramsay and Reynolds there could have been

little real rivalry; even if such had existed, we should place it to a very different account to Walpole, who, writing to Dalrymple in 1759, says, "Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Ramsay can scarce be rivals—their manners are so different. The former is bold and has a kind of tempestuous colouring, yet with dignity and grace; the latter is all delicacy. Mr. Reynolds seldom *succeeds with women*, Mr. Ramsay is formed to paint them;" and this was written after Reynolds had exhibited the lovely portrait of Kitty Fisher, and of him who was to leave us portraits of the Gunnings, Waldegraves, Hornecks, Mrs. Sheridan, and a host of others which we contemplate with such delight, even when faded from the loveliness of their first completion, as to prevent us wondering that in that ruder age beings so beautiful were mobbed in the streets by admiring crowds.

Thus far we have spoken of Reynolds only as a portrait painter, but he claims attention as an historical painter also, as in this branch of the Art many of his friends and contemporaries awarded him high rank, and warmly lamented that his talents as an historical painter were not more publicly called into requisition. Northcote, in the beginning of his memoir, says:—"Notwithstanding that he carried his Art so high beyond our expectations, and has done so much, we cannot but lament that he was not more frequently called upon to exercise his genius on subjects more suitable to his enlarged mind;" and elsewhere adds:—"Much severe criticism was thrown out against his large picture of the scene in the tragedy of Macbeth; but my own opinion of this piece is, that the visionary and awful effect produced, both in the completion and

execution of the background, is certainly without a parallel in the world. Its novelty and excellence bid defiance to all future attempts at rivalry. Had the figure of Macbeth been but equal in its requisites in this appalling scene, the picture would have stood without a comparison on earth." Mrs. Montague "wished Mr. Reynolds was employed on some great public work that would do honour to our country in future ages." And adds:—"He has the spirit of a Grecian artist; the Athenians did not employ such men in painting portraits to place over a chimney or the door of a private cabinet." Among the encomiums on the painter, which followed the collected exhibition of his works in 1813, Farington, his biographer, repeats the following from the *Observer* newspaper:—"The present exhibition will for ever set at rest the question, which by some has been so strangely raised, as to the competency of Sir Joshua Reynolds to the attainment of excellence in the highest department of Art, had a corresponding disposition on the part of the public induced him to direct his studies to that object. No one can hesitate to pronounce in the affirmative, who contemplates the 'Ugolino,' the 'Cardinal Beaufort,' or the 'Infant Jupiter.'" And Farington himself, after ranking Reynolds with the most distinguished geniuses who have adorned the Arts, says of him, it is true, more temperately, that "even to historical subjects, in many instances, he gave a charm that was before unknown. His 'Ugolino' is an eminent example of pathos and force of expression, to which his excellent arrangement of colour and light and shade greatly contributed. His picture of the 'Nativity' had all the splendour and harmony that

colour could give; but these qualities were applied to that grave and simple subject with so much judgment and feeling, that the whole appeared a scene of holy mystery. Nor could the imagination have been more powerfully affected if the same scene had been illustrated by the forms of Michael Angelo and Raphael."

Now it is precisely on these points we must differ. Notwithstanding the greatness of Reynolds as a portrait painter, and the beauty of his fancy subjects, he wholly fails as a painter of history. Allowing all that arises from "colour and harmony," we must assert, that, both as to form and character, the figures introduced into these solemn dramas are wholly unworthy to represent the persons of the actors therein. Can any one, looking on the "Ugolino," imagine for a moment that fierce and terrible Count, shut in the Tower of Famine by the Arno's banks, looking with stony horror on his starving sons, knowing their slow but certain doom, seeing one by one grandsons and son perish of hunger before his eyes, "his little Anselm first;" and brooding to his dying hour on that everlasting revenge which Dante looked on in his dread *Inferno;* the Count, in horrible reprisal, gnawing to all eternity the bony skull of the arch-priest, his treacherous foe? Or be it the "Holy Family," the mother and St. Joseph, painted by Reynolds, are simply country rustics, and the infant Saviour, St. John, &c. might, for all there is of character or holiness, change places with the Cupid who fixes his arrow to transfix the Nymph. Where is the Holy Child, who ought to be named but with reverence, and painted, if at all, only after deep meditation, and it may be, prayer. Again, his infant "Samuel," more of a fancy

portrait than an historical subject, is merely a simple child saying its nightly prayer to nurse or mother ere it sleeps—not him set apart from birth to holy offices and reverent service in the temple; and called, even while yet a child, to rebuke the laxity of the elder prophet, the head of the theocracy of Israel. Such subjects as these want more than mere colour, or light and shade; more than mere sweetness and simplicity; something the painter should reveal to us in them of early knowledge, and of perfected praise from the lips of childhood, which should at once make us feel that "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Reynolds has left us many aphorisms; and many little insights into his mode of working may be obtained from his own notes, and from recollections by his sitters and his pupils. He evidently painted rather from the inspiration of the moment and of his subject, than from any set rule, varying his manner, both for experiment, and as his work led him on. Unlike his successor Lawrence, he seems not to have made any careful drawings on his canvas, but to have trusted to his brush to model out the form, changed often in the progress of his picture when any new position or expression pleased him; hence the failure of many of his pictures. He found a real pleasure in painting, and was untiring at his work. Beattie, the poet, tells that he sat five hours to him on the first sitting for the allegorical portrait, "in which time he *finished* my head, and sketched in the figure. The likeness," he adds, "is most striking, and the execution most masterly, I was not the least fatigued. I was so placed as to see in a mirror the whole progress;" and he declares that the masterly

manner of the artist differed as much from that of all other painters, as the execution of Gerardini on the violin differs from that of a common fiddler. Reynolds was of opinion that a painter should look upon his subject or sitter as if it were a picture, and that he would then be the more likely to realize it as such. He seems never to have seen *outline*, but the whole as a picture; its breadth, colour, and light and dark. Thus his eye was always dwelling on the relation of parts, and of the figure to the ground. When it melted into the ground he was not seeking, as is too often the case, to find the form, but was content, with Nature, to lose it; even the light and shade seems, as he wrought, to be considered less as light and shade, than as different modifications of a coloured surface, which we may suppose him mentally matching as a lady does her silks. He used to say:—"Consider the object before you as more made out by light and shadow than by lines." Yet while he was thus mentally seizing the form through light and shade, and the light and shade even as it were through colour, he was wonderfully rendering the highest character and noblest expression of his sitter. To illustrate what we mean, let us take the picture of Lady Galway and her child, called "Pick-a-back," the property of Lord Monson. One can imagine Reynolds, in painting this portrait, deeply interested in the lovely relative tints and tones of the hand of the lady; the arm of the child she clasps, mixed up with the flesh tints of the neck of the mother; these heightened by the pink colour of the scarf, and contrasted with the dash of dark in the pendent lock of the mother's hair. Imagine him while he painted them, as hardly caring whether the

rich mass represented arm, hand, neck, or scarf, but simply that it was a lovely incarnation of varied flesh tints; yet how beautiful is the whole for its tender sentiment, as well as for its colour, light and shade, and impasto.

Reynolds's mode of painting, and the beautiful effects he obtained, made such an impression on the practice of our schools, for evil as well as good, that it is necessary to enter somewhat at length into his methods of execution. We know that some of his pictures failed very soon after they left the easel, many during his lifetime, and that while some have retained their full beauty, numbers of those which have come down to us are but faded relics of the past.

Farington says, that "happy as was the general progress of Sir Joshua throughout his life, his course was not absolutely untroubled. Some of the colours he employed were of a fugitive nature, and in a little time lost their brilliancy. This caused much complaint, which in truth was too well founded, for many of his pictures were reduced almost to the state of painting in chiaroscuro; and made Horace Walpole say bitterly, "If Sir Joshua is satisfied with his own departed pictures, it is more than the possessors or posterity will be. I think he ought to be paid in annuities only for so long as his pictures last." And Sterne, in his *Tristram Shandy*, alluding to the fickleness of women, says playfully, "I would rather not answer for my aunt Dinah, were she alive, faith scarce for her picture, were it but painted by Reynolds." Reynolds painted, in 1760, a picture of Sir Walter Blackett, for the Infirmary at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. In Leslie's life it is said,—"This

picture stands well." But there is a very different story current. Sir Walter lived to a great age, an age beyond the three-score years and ten allotted to the common run of mankind, and as he advanced in years, found the picture which was to hand him down to posterity, so faded and perished from the fleeting pigments and unsatisfactory vehicles Sir Joshua had used, that the Newcastle knight made the following epigram on his own portrait, and was very fond of repeating it to his friends:—

> "Painting of old was surely well designed
> To keep the features of the dead in mind,
> But this great rascal has reversed the plan,
> And made his picture die before the man."

Sir Joshua, with his usual equanimity, took such sarcasms patiently and even joked himself at times on the subject, remarking that he might say of his works, that he came off with "*flying* colours." It is but fair to hear him in his own justification. "My frequent alterations," says he, "arose from a refined taste, which could not acquiesce in anything short of a high degree of excellence. I had not an opportunity of being early initiated in the principles of colouring; no man, indeed, could teach me. If I have never been settled with respect to colouring, let it at the same time be remembered that my unsteadiness in this respect proceeded from an inordinate desire to possess every kind of excellence that I saw in the works of others. My fickleness in the mode of colouring arose from an eager desire to attain the highest excellence."

The reasons of the failure of Sir Joshua's works may be ranged under three heads, and in discussing them we shall necessarily have to write on his methods

of execution, for which he has left us ample notes. These causes of failure were :—

1st. The use of improper vehicles.

2nd. The mixture in the same work of various vehicles which are antagonistic to one another, such as those which are soft and fluent under those which are hard; rapid dryers over slow dryers, and even in the same picture, watery with oily vehicles.

3rd. The use of uncertain and unstable pigments, and their improper combination either with one another or with the vehicles he added to them.

Reynolds seems to have departed from the Flemish mode of colouring, that of painting at once from a white ground, and to have adopted a method analogous to the Venetian system, preparing a ground by a first colouring in black and white, or, these with a little admixture of red, and then on this preparation completing with rich colourings and glazings; although in his numerous experiments, he at times worked so completely at random that it is difficult to trace any systematic mode of procedure. Mason the poet, who himself dabbled in Art, records that in 1754, when Reynolds was young in his practice, Lord Holderness sat to him for his portrait, which portrait he afterwards presented to the poet. Mason having been engaged in settling the preliminaries as to sitting, &c., was permitted to be present in the painting-room on every occasion when Lord Holderness sat, and he thus describes the mode in which the picture was painted :—"On a light-coloured canvas Reynolds had already laid a ground of white, and which was still wet, where he meant to place the head. He had nothing upon his palette but flake white, lake, and black; and

without making any previous sketch or outline, he began with much celerity to scumble these pigments together, till he had produced, in less than an hour, a likeness sufficiently intelligible, yet withal, as might be expected, cold and pallid to the last degree. At the second sitting, he added, I believe, to the other three colours, a little Naples yellow; but I do not remember that he used any vermilion, neither then nor at the third trial required." Lake alone produced the carnation. "The drapery" of this three-quarter portrait was "crimson velvet, copied from a coat Lord Holderness then wore, and apparently not only painted, but glazed with lake, which has stood to this hour perfectly well, though the face, which as well as the whole picture *was highly varnished* before he sent it home, *very soon faded*, and soon after, the forehead particularly, cracked, almost to peeling off, which," he adds, "it would have done long since had not his pupil Doughty repaired it." Mason afterwards says, that in 1759, when painting "Venus and Cupid," Reynolds had "laid aside his first favourite, lake, preferring Chinese vermilion, thinking it more durable. I have seen it ('the Venus and Cupid'), during its progress," he continues, "in a variety of different hues of colouring, sometimes rosy beyond nature, sometimes pallid and blue." We saw this picture in the Institution in 1865. The flesh stands well, the colour is good, but cracked with dry hard cracks; the browns have drawn together. It has evidently been much worked upon in parts.

Leslie says that Reynolds believed as confidently in the *Venetian secret*, as ever alchemist did in the "philosopher's stone." We ourselves were acquainted with an old painter, a pupil of West's, who in his latter days

had devoted himself to repairing pictures, and who possessed portraits by both Titian and Rubens, which he said had belonged to Sir Joshua, and parts of which, to obtain this wished-for secret, had been scraped or rubbed down to the panel, to lay bare the under-paintings or dead colourings. It was this search for the Venetian secret—this constant course of experiment in his pictures, that has caused so many failures. It was said to Sir Joshua that he had probably never sent away one of his pictures in the most perfect state in which it had been while he worked on it; and he allowed this to be true, but added, that by these experiments he certainly gained ground on the whole, and that, if one is not bold enough to run the risk of losing, he can never hope to win.

At one time he thought he had at length arrived at the best mode of painting, and wrote in his note-book, 1770—"I am fixed in my manner of painting. First and second painting, oil and copaiba varnish solely with black, ultramarine and white; for the after and last paintings, yellow, black and lake, and black and ultramarine without white," but he adds, "retouched with a little white and with other colours;" from this process, however, he soon changed, as we find in the same year notes of quite different methods. Sometimes on this black and white ground, he added the tints of the complexion, either with copaiba varnish, or with mastic without oil. Thus, he says of a portrait of Kitty Fisher, painted in 1766, "Face with wax, drapery with wax, and afterwards varnished," which is made clearer by the notes on Mr. Pelham's portrait of the same year. "Painted with lake and white, black and blue, varnished with green

mastic dissolved in oil, with sugar of lead and rock alum, yellow lake and Naples yellow mixed with the varnish;" from which it more clearly appears that on the cold neutral first colouring the enrichments were added in colours tempered with varnish. Thus painted, we find from many notes, that the picture was surface-varnished throughout before it was sent home. Such pictures failing from the wax-medium, the copaïba, or other vehicles used, the restorer, in taking off the outer coat of varnish, almost of necessity took off the last rich painting, which had been completed with the same kind of varnish. Here we trace the ruin caused by the improper vehicles used; and the pictures thus destroyed are those pallid grey, but still delicately beautiful portraits by his hand, such as the "Kitty Fisher" shown a few years ago in the British Institution—the "Miss Hornecks," and a host of others.

These pictures, in fact, were wholly denuded of the "deep-toned brightness" which Sir Joshua sought for at the expense of durability. We extract from Cotton's *Sir Joshua and his Works*, 1856," notes by Sir William Beechey and Haydon upon Reynolds's experiments in colouring. Beechey says, "Sir Joshua's having made use of Venice turpentine and wax, as a varnish" (or vehicle), "accounts in a great measure for the pale and raw appearance of his pictures after cleaning. Rubbed over slightly with spirits of turpentine," and alas! too often spirits of wine are used,—"the glazing colours must inevitably be removed." He tells us that Sir Joshua "loaded his pictures with Venice turpentine and wax without oil, without considering the consequences. It is," he adds, "a most delicious vehicle to use, and gives

the power of doing such things and producing such effects as cannot be approached by anything else *while the pictures are fresh.*" He tells us, too, that "Rembrandt followed the same practice, but only painted his lights with a full body of colour, his shadows were always smooth, thin, and very soft. Sir Joshua loaded his shadows as much as his lights. There is a binding quality in white that always dries hard like cement. Dark colours are the reverse, and if thickly painted crack with any vehicle except oil."

We are rather inclined to think that Reynolds's darks have more often failed from the use of asphaltum, of which we shall presently speak, and that a picture painted throughout with pure wax properly melted into varnish will become hard and firm, and will not crack. We have a copy after Sir Joshua so painted thirty-five years ago and varnished at the time. It is as hard and firm as when first painted, and it is rather to the use of asphaltum or to heterogeneous mixtures of incongruous vehicles that the worst failures are to be imputed. Of this kind of vicious execution, the portrait of Miss Kirkman, noted October 2, 1772, is one of the worst specimens, "gum-dragon and whiting, then waxed, then egged, then varnished, and then retouched—cracks," adds Sir Joshua himself, and who would doubt it? "This manner," says Beechey, "is the most extraordinary, it is insanity. He had at his elbow a mocking fiend—gum and whiting! then waxed, then egged, then varnished, then repainted." Haydon says, "Reynolds wanted to get at once what the old masters did with the simplest materials and then left time and drying to enamel. To wax a head, then egg, then varnish it, then paint again, all and each still half dry beneath, could only end in ruin, however exquisite

at the time," adding, "whilst West's detestable surface has stood from the simplicity of the vehicle, half Sir Joshua's heads are gone; though what remains are so exquisite one is willing to sacrifice them for the works we see," a sentence we concur in as far as it is possible to understand it.

Of his own portrait, painted in the same year, Reynolds notes, "Water and gum-dragon" (? tragacanth), "vermilion, lake, black, without yellow, varnished over with egg, after Venice turpentine." "Heavens, murder! murder!" cries Haydon, "it must have cracked under the brush!!" No wonder that when Reynolds complained to Northcote that he did not clean his brushes well, the pupil retorted, "How can I when they are so sticky and gummy!" And here let us give a note of warning to those who possess pictures by Reynolds, that they should avoid new German processes of restoration, processes for softening the gum of the varnish, rendering it fluid for a time, that it may subside evenly and again harden. What, under such a process, would become of the last glazing paintings made with the same varnish as a vehicle? Between taking off too much, or flowing the glazings into the varnish, there is hardly a choice of evils.

Reynolds himself said that vegetable pigments, the lakes and yellows used for the tints of his complexions, are far more brilliant than mineral pigments, and he declared to Northcote that they would not change, but might be safely used if locked up by varnish. He also seems to have felt that they were purer and fresher when used with varnish than with any oil medium, since all oils have more or less yellow of their own: hence his use

of varnishes as a vehicle. These colours, fugitive in themselves, as the spirit gradually evaporated from the gum, faded entirely away, even when their departure was not hastened by the detergents of the restorer.

Then again Sir Joshua was accustomed to use mineral pigments, under conditions wholly unfavourable to their durability, such as his known use of orpiment (a preparation from arsenic), which suffers rapid change when mixed, as he mixed it, with white lead. Thus Northcote gives as extracts from Sir Joshua's notes, at the latter end of the year 1775, the following directions :—"To lay the palette : first lay carmine and white in different degrees ; secondly, orpiment and white ditto ; then lay blue-black and white ditto. The first sitting, for expedition, make a mixture on the palette as near the sitter's complexion as you can." This alone would account for many changes, since carmine and white have as little stability as orpiment and white. Failures from fugitive pigments are those mostly alluded to by his contemporaries, and this before the *restorer* had practised his art upon them. Such changes have, no doubt, progressed since the painter's lifetime, until some of his works appear as if they were merely grey preparations, fine in their modelling, in their roundness, in their character, and even in a modified beauty,—yet but ghosts and shadows of what they first were. Such pictures are not necessarily cracked ; they may or may not have hair cracks in the solid lights, a matter of small importance either way, but the colour is irretrievably gone, past the skill of any restorer, unless he substitutes his own colouring for that of Sir Joshua.

Sir Joshua's contemporaries do not allude to his use of bituminous pigments ; neither, strange to say, is there

much reference in his notes to these preparations, whether as mummy, bitumen, or asphaltum, which to us appear among the most prominent causes of the failure of his pictures. The fact is, that the bad effects of asphaltum are often deferred until the picture is removed into some new locality, or exposed to new conditions, or to some new coating of rapidly drying varnish, when it will give way in a few weeks, after having remained for many years in apparent soundness. Beechey remarks that Hoppner painted with wax melted into mastic varnish, and yet that his pictures stand while Sir Joshua's had already failed. But since that time Hoppner's pictures have broken up even more than Sir Joshua's, of which the Earl of Moira and Duke of Bedford at Hampton Court are sad examples. This, we believe, has arisen not from wax but from asphaltum, and we may presume had not begun to show itself when Beechey wrote. When the masses of shadow or the darks of the picture are painted with these pigments the parts gradually separate, but not to the ground, rather leaving a wide pitchy shining seam. This may be seen under its worst form in the background of the noble picture of "Lord Heathfield," (No. 111, National Gallery,) and on the trees of the background of the "Holy Family," (No. 78 in the same collection.) Attempts have been made in such cases to press the parts together, which succeeds for a short, and only for a short time; permanent repair has not yet been achieved, nor does it seem possible.

Again these bituminous pigments used in the darks have in places the solid half-tints made with white, painted into them; this partially hardens the bitumen, and a new set of cracks is the result; they are gene-

rally wide and down to the ground, and show whitish to the eye. These appear in the thigh and other parts of the "St. John," No. 78, and in the hands and face of the Virgin and infant Saviour in the same picture. Such may be filled with stopping, the white stopping hidden by painting over so carefully as not to extend beyond the part stopped; but even in this case there are grave doubts whether the cracks will not again separate. Another class of failures arises from either a thin finishing painting or a glazing in which bitumens have been used and the picture afterwards varnished. A curious example of this was shown at South Kensington Museum in 1863 in a portrait of Reynolds's niece, "Theophila Gwatkin." The whole surface of this picture was drawn pretty evenly into small blotches; in this state evaporization takes place until in time the external coat will wholly exhale. Yet the picture even as it remains is extremely beautiful for breadth and tone, and for its charming sweetness of manner.

We have already given our own experience of the use of wax, and since writing thus far, have had an opportunity afforded us of again seeing the wonderful portraits by Reynolds at Manchester House. There, hanging side by side, are three of his very finest pictures, viz., the original "Strawberry Girl"—for there are at least two repetitions—the fine sitting portrait of "Nelly O'Brien," the one with the hat shading the face, and the portrait of "Miss Bowles with her Dog." A careful inspection has convinced us without a doubt that the first and the last named works are painted with wax. No one can look at the edge of the rock where it comes

against the sky in the "Strawberry Girl," and not be aware of the plentiful use of wax on the foliage; the medium stands up with a crisp, full, semi-transparent impasto that is undeniable. And Reynolds says of it in his note-book, "*Cera sol.!*"—wholly wax. The painting of the white drapery curiously indicates the *drag* occasioned by a wax and turpentine medium, yet excepting that, perhaps when in Rogers' possession, it has been varnished with a brown varnish which has run down, it is in an uninjured state. Of the "Miss Bowles with her Dog" we are not aware that there is any note; but here also the presence of wax as a medium is equally clear in many parts of the picture; which, with the slight exception of a few small pieces chipped off quite down to the ground, is even in a finer state than the "Strawberry Girl." The face of the young child is lovely, the eyes swim in the laughing lustre of happy childhood; it is one of the sweetest pictures in existence. Leslie used to relate that the parents of Miss Bowles were about to take her to Romney for her portrait, when, naming it to Sir George Beaumont, he strongly advised Sir Joshua. "But his pictures fade," said the father. "Never mind," was the reply, "a faded picture by Reynolds is better than the best of Romney's." He proposed that Sir Joshua should be invited to dinner and to see the child at her own home, and this being arranged Sir Joshua, delighted with the little lady, played such funny tricks to amuse her that the child thought it quite a holiday to go next day and see the gentleman who had conjured away her plate and made her so merry. In the picture she seems as if she feared he would conjure away her pet also, as she hugs the dog to her bosom

almost to throttling, and is looking archly out at the painter, as if ready to retreat if he should advance. The "Nelly O'Brien," too, is in an excellent state, though the mode of painting is less clear. In the bow room of the same mansion, between the windows, are two head-size portraits of young ladies, the complexions lovely, the carnations melting into pure greys. With the exception of some slight hair-cracks they are as pure as from the easel, and make Lawrence's portrait of "Lady Blessington," famous in its day, look like a piece of meretricious china-painting. Most of the other Reynolds' paintings in this fine collection, to the number of ten or twelve, are in the same condition, and happily prove that his works have not so wholly failed.

We cannot do justice to Reynolds without referring to his great abilities as a writer on Art. He was the intimate associate of Dr. Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, Dr. Percy, and other eminent men; and no name occurs more frequently than his in the pages of Boswell. Johnson observed, on his first interview with Reynolds, that he had a habit of thinking for himself, and at once formed a friendship with him which was maintained to the last hour of his life. The doctor remarked, "A story is a specimen of human manners, and derives its sole virtue from its truth. When Foote has told me something, I dismiss it from my mind like a passing shadow; when Reynolds tells me something, I consider myself as possessed of an idea the more." And again, referring to a peculiarly painter-like quality, "I know no man who has passed through life with more *observation* than Reynolds." And Burke, speaking of how much Sir Joshua owed to the writings and conversations of

Johnson, said "that nothing showed more the greatness of his parts than his taking advantage of both, and making some application of them to his profession, while Johnson neither understood nor desired to understand anything of painting, and had no distinct idea of its nomenclature, even in those parts which had got most into common use." Reynolds's writings comprise his three papers in the *Idler*, published 1759-60: "False Criticisms on Painting," No. 76, from which we have quoted; "On the Grand Style in Painting," No. 79; and "On the True Idea of Beauty," No. 82; his annotations to Du Fresnoy's *Art of Painting;* his notes on the *Art of the Low Countries;* some brief remarks in Dr. Johnson's *Shakspeare;* and his well-known discourses to the Students of the Royal Academy.

These discourses especially possess great literary merit; simply yet elegantly expressed, they are forcibly didactic; the work of a master, a thoughtful observer, skilled in all the works of all the schools, and himself of high professional attainment. So much were they esteemed that Reynolds was denied their authorship, which was attributed to Burke, who was asserted at least to have assisted in their composition. Yet they bear the evident impress of one mind expressed with one pen. This is not, however, left open to mere opinion. The late B. R. Haydon wrote, in 1844, to Mrs. Gwatkin, Reynolds's surviving niece, then residing at Plymouth, and in her eighty-ninth year; and he inserts in his *Journal* this copy of her reply:—"Intimately associated as I was with my uncle Sir Joshua Reynolds, and conversant as I am both with his occupations and his habits, I can take upon myself positively to assert that he was

the author, the unassisted author, of the *Discourses on Painting*. The numerous MSS. that I have in my possession, penned by my uncle, on various subjects, and often in my presence and that of my sister, the Marchioness of Thomond, when it was his habit to walk up and down the room in which we were sitting, and, as the thought occurred, commit it to paper; and the subject of those thoughts is a convincing proof, and would furnish such proof to any person of literary talent, that Sir Joshua possessed a mind of original conception and literary power, needing no assistance from Burke either in composition or retouching of his discourses; and as Burke and my uncle were men of dissimilar and characteristic talent, and Burke had not that conception of idea as to the art of painting which must have originated in my uncle's mind, the unfair calumny on his fame can have no credible foundation with those who either knew him or Burke." Gilbert Stuart, the American portrait painter, who studied some time in London, has told us on this subject that "he was present one day in a large company with Dr. Johnson, when some person ventured to tell the doctor that the public had charged him as well as Burke with assisting Sir Joshua in the composition of his lectures. The doctor appeared indignant, and replied, 'Sir Joshua Reynolds, sir! would as soon get me to paint for him as to write for him.'"

In considering the instructive value of the discourses of Sir Joshua, we must remember the time and the occasion that called them forth. As we have seen, the traditions of Art in this country had either been wholly lost, or had been transmitted through teachers who were themselves unable to comprehend or illustrate them.

The foundation of our Academy—intended to be a rallying-point for artists, and a school to disseminate sound doctrines on Art—imposed on its first President the duty of laying down rules for the guidance of the pupils, and of enunciating certain general principles derived from the practice of the earlier schools, and more especially of those in which the aim of Art had been lofty, and the subjects chosen of a more elevated character than those by which our artists were then surrounded. This led him to uphold the grand style, rather at the expense of those maxims founded on mere individual imitation, and to assert "that a mere copier of Nature can never produce anything great,"—led him, as in this case, to combat predominant errors by truths, somewhat too broadly stated when taken by themselves, but holding their right place when the course of his teaching is read and studied as a whole. Thus, in his fourth discourse, he lays great stress on the observance of *rules;* and, after dilating on the advantages of Academical combination, goes on to impress upon the young implicit obedience to *rules*, "confident that this is the only efficacious method of making progress in Art." He decries facility and spontaneity, and urges laborious preparation, by previous study of the works of others, before attempting to be original. Hence it has been said that Reynolds upheld rules and perseverance as better than originality. Yet in the next lecture, after the student has been presumed to have passed the preliminary stages of his education, he regards him as exercising for the future "a sovereignty over those rules which hitherto restrained him. Comparing now no longer the performances of Art with each other, but examining the Art

itself by the standard of Nature, he corrects what is erroneous, supplies what is scanty, and adds, by his own observation, what the industry of his predecessors may have yet left wanting to perfection."

Again, in his second discourse, Reynolds says, "Invention, strictly speaking, is little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory. He who has laid up no materials can produce no combinations." And further, in his sixth discourse, "Invention is one of the great marks of genius; but if we consult experience, we shall find that it is by being conversant with the inventions of others that we learn to invent, as by reading the thoughts of others we learn to think." It has been inferred from these and other like passages that Reynolds had little belief in genius, and placed more to the account of study and industry. Yet he said, "Could we teach taste and genius, they would no longer be taste and genius." And it must be remembered that he was addressing a body of youths too well inclined to believe themselves endowed with this heavenly gift, and that to them study was only an obstruction and an evil; that he knew genius was only a gift to the few, and even in them to be improved and armed by study and labour; while to those not so gifted, perseverance and the knowledge derived from the past must be the only sure road to any excellence they could hope to attain.

He had also to combat a widely prevalent idea that genius and taste, as heaven-born gifts, were in no way connected with reason and common sense; and, as he himself said, "If, in order to be intelligible, I appear to degrade Art, by bringing her down from her visionary situation

in the clouds, it is only to give her a more solid mansion upon the earth;" adding, "when we talk of waiting the call and inspiration of genius . . . . how much the wild freedom and liberty of imagination is cramped by attending to established rules; we generally rest contented with mere words, or at best entertain notions not only groundless but pernicious." "Both gifts," he concludes, "if gifts, are gifts which need and are improved by cultivation." These words were uttered by him rather relatively to the poet than to the painter, to whom, however, they are far more pointedly applicable; for if a born and gifted poet, "wanting the accomplishment of verse," is unable to express to his brother men the glowing imagery which Nature awakens in him, how shall the unstudied painter do it who is so much more fettered with the executive of his art, and must master so many mechanical processes before he can realize to those around him the bright and glowing pictures which Nature, to others commonplace and prosaic, paints with such glowing tints for him?

In Reynolds's wish to escape from the mean art, the puerile taste, and the trivialities of the lower schools, and to magnify those of Rome and Florence, he too broadly asserts that all individuality, all imitative rendering, should be avoided, since "Nature herself may be too closely copied,"—a doctrine which has been boldly opposed, and the very contrary practice enforced, by a new school which has risen up among us, to which we may hereafter advert. There can, however, be no doubt that his contemporaries adopted too literally a doctrine which commended itself to their indolence, and carried the recommendation far further than the author intended;

since he allows that "some circumstances of minuteness and particularity frequently tend to give an air of truth and to interest the spectator in an extraordinary manner;" concluding, however, with the key to his counsel, in saying that "the usual and most dangerous error is on the side of minuteness, and, therefore, I think caution most necessary where most have failed." It is as easy to point out apparent inconsistencies in the discourses and other writings of Reynolds, and to confute separate points of his teaching, as it is to oppose separate texts of Scripture. There is no doubt that the writings of the first President have greatly influenced, and justly influenced, the practice of our schools. They are sound, practical, and were thoroughly suited for the period when they were produced. His professional brethren rely on his teaching, because he was a painter as well as a critic, and so ably illustrated on his canvas his discourses to the students. Read as a whole, they are a body of sound precepts such as no other school started with; and unless each artist is to begin from the beginning, and ignore what has gone before, it will be no waste of time to study the Art-precepts of the great President, if it is only to test their truth by trying to confute them.

Reynolds continued the practice of his art with but little intermission during his long career. Painting to him was such a real pleasure, that to paint was to enjoy life; and after he had received his round of sitters for the day, he loved to spend the evening in society. He was a constant diner out, and gave dinners, at which a careless hospitality reigned, but which were frequented by the most intellectual people of the day. In 1764, the Literary Club was founded—a club which met once a week

at the Turk's Head Tavern, in Gerrard Street, supping together, and spending the evening in convivial conversation. Reynolds, who was one of the club's foundation members—indeed it was formed at his suggestion—rarely missed being present, and took an active share in the discussions. He was what his friend Johnson called essentially a clubable man, and notwithstanding his deafness, took part, and often a very successful part, in conversations the records of which, by Boswell and Burney, are read in our times with such continuous interest. His temper was mild and equable, and we often find him fulfilling the office of peacemaker, by the turn which he gave to a dispute, or by interposing a qualifying remark. Leslie, in his Life, published since this sketch was written, has fully rescued Reynolds from the insinuations and aspersions of Cunningham; and Mr. Tom Taylor, in his additions to Leslie, has shown us the great portrait painter surrounded by his friends; in his relations with the celebrities of his time, (almost all of whom sat to him;) living in the political world of that troubled period, and in his relations with his brethren of Art.

In 1768, after various abortive efforts, a Royal Academy of Arts was founded. An account of this Institution is given in a former chapter. Reynolds had belonged to the Incorporated Society of Artists, which preceded it, but had withdrawn, from the dissensions which eventually broke up that body. He seems at first to have stood aloof from the new Society. Acknowledged at all hands as holding the first place in Art, Reynolds's co-operation in the scheme of an academy was of the first importance to its success, and he yielded to the wishes of his brother artists to become the President. On his elec-

tion, George III. honoured him with knighthood, which he seems to have valued highly, as he did the office of mayor of his little native village of Plympton, conferred upon him a short time previously; to these titles, Oxford, in 1773, added that of Doctor of Civil Laws.

From the first foundation of the Royal Academy, Reynolds was a constant contributor to its exhibitions; the catalogues from 1769 to 1790 contain lists of 244 of his pictures. His life passed quietly at his easel; though a few dissensions with envious brethren varied it at times. In 1781, and again in 1783, he made short journeys in Holland and Flanders, publishing valuable notes of the pictures he saw on those occasions, as well as of his methods of studying from them. His life was one of almost uninterrupted success and prosperity, disturbed only for a while by his difference with his colleagues and temporary secession from the Royal Academy. Even this seems to have arisen from a mistake, in which both parties had right on their side, and on which it now is difficult to decide, since cabals, it is impossible to record, would have their weight in his estimate of the proceedings; and the opposition may be allowed to have had a reasonable dread of the President's will, which had at times the authority of law.

Farington tells us that while Reynolds resided in St. Martin's Lane his prices for portraits were—three quarters, ten guineas; half length, twenty guineas; whole length, forty guineas. His master Hudson's prices were rather higher, and were soon adopted by him. About four or five years later both raised their prices to fifteen, thirty, and sixty guineas for the three classes of portrait

respectively. In 1760 Reynolds removed to Leicester Square, and then his prices were twenty-five, fifty, and one hundred guineas for the three classes of portrait. In 1781, we learn from Malone, his prices were fifty, one hundred, and two hundred guineas, and continued so till his death. For the "Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse," in the Dulwich Gallery, Mr. Desenfans paid him seven hundred guineas. For his "Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy" he received three hundred guineas only. For the priceless "Strawberry Girl," the "Muscipula," and the "Shepherd Boy," his price was fifty guineas each. For his historical works he was paid at about the same rate—the "Death of Dido," now in the Royal Collection, two hundred guineas; "Death of Cardinal Beaufort," five hundred guineas; "Holy Family," five hundred guineas; "Count Ugolino," four hundred guineas; and for his Russian picture, "Hercules strangling the Serpents," fifteen hundred guineas.

Reynolds never married. When he first settled in London, his sister Frances kept his house, and afterwards his niece, Miss Palmer, fulfilled the same duty. During his long life his good health was almost uninterrupted, till the latter part of the year 1782, when he experienced a slight sensation of paralysis, from which, however, he perfectly recovered. But in 1789, his left eye, which had long been weak, failed, and fearing the total loss of sight, he at once resolved to relinquish the practice of his profession. He continued, however, to enjoy society, but was subject to fits of depression, fearing the loss of the remaining eye. Other distressing symptoms afterwards arose, which his friends ascribed to his depressed spirits; these,

however, continued to increase, and after lingering about three months, during which he bore his illness with calmness and equanimity, he died of an enlarged liver on the 23rd of February, 1792. His biographers love to tell of his lying in state at the Royal Academy—the long funeral procession—the pall, borne by dukes, marquises, and earls—and his place beside Wren in the crypt of St. Paul's. Well might the great and the noble honour him, who has made us familiar with all that were lovely, as well as most that were worthy of being known, in the age he embellished. He left behind him many pictures, finished and unfinished, a fine collection of drawings by the old masters, and about 80,000*l.*, the bulk of which, on the death of his sister Frances, reverted to his niece, Miss Palmer, who became, by marriage, Marchioness of Thomond.

CHAPTER VI.

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH, R.A.

Born at Ipswich—Comes to London to study Art—Placed under Gravelot and Hayman, and enters the St. Martin's Lane Academy—Mode of Study there—Returns to his Country Home—Had not the Advantage of Foreign Study—Its True Value—Copying—Forms his own Style—Its Ease and Facility—Decision and Power—His Works remain Undecayed—His Portraits equal to his Landscapes—Their Simplicity and Truth—His Manner and the Principles on which he Worked—Description of his Landscapes and Rustic Art.

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH, R.A., the last and youngest of the three artists whose works characterize the period under review, was born at Ipswich in 1727, and there his early taste for Art was first developed. It has already been said that he was great both in landscape and in portraiture. He seems from the first to have employed his talents on either indiscriminately, and to have continued to practise both simultaneously to the end of his life. At fifteen years of age, we are told by Fulcher, in his life of the painter, Gainsborough came to London and was lodged in the house of a silversmith, who introduced him to Gravelot, the engraver, from whom he acquired some knowledge of that art and valuable help in drawing. He was then for some time, four years it is said, under Hayman, and entered himself as a student at the St. Martin's Lane Academy, a place much frequented by the artists of that day—by the juniors for practice, by the seniors as visitors and dogmatizers. It may be presumed that there were

means of study for those who chose to avail themselves of it, but there can be no doubt that the place abounded with all the threadbare rules and traditional commonplaces of a profession in a state of senility, and men ready to prostrate themselves before those false gods—Lely and Kneller. Hogarth, who hated them as a clique favouring the "black masters," stigmatizes them as a body of coach-painters, scene-painters, drapery-painters, picture-dealers, picture-cleaners and frame-makers, and says that they "thrust the canvas between the student and the sky, and tradition between him and his God;" for which latter it would be more true to read *nature*. Here "hail fellow well met," they praised all Art that was according to their rules, and despised all innovators. Among them, no doubt, was Ellis, the pupil of Kneller, who expressed his contempt of Reynolds's portraits when they were shown on his return from Rome, saying, "This will never answer; why, you don't paint in the least like Sir Godfrey!" and on the painter's attempting to reason with him on the subject, contemptuously finished the conversation by exclaiming, "Shakspeare in poetry, and Kneller in painting, damme!" and stalked pompously out of the room.

The artists of that day led a life of careless independence, living from hand to mouth, a jovial improvident set, spending their days at the easel, their nights at the club or the tavern. Art to them was but a trade, and provided they fulfilled the orders of their customers, they were little solicitous about its improvement—it was compounded by recipe and on the conventional rules of the past, the same artistic properties, the same shop stock of postures and attitudes, as may be inferred from the

oft-repeated tale of the portrait painted for the innovating sitter, who desiring to wear his hat on his head, another was as usual placed under the arm—the very studio was a workshop in the commonest sense of the term; one painted the head, another the hands, if hands were included in the price, while a third fitted on the coat and the ruffles. In such a school and from such companions, Gainsborough could acquire little that would forward him in his art except mere drawing power, which having obtained he wisely left this knot of incapables, and quitting London, returned to his native place, after an absence of three years. Here he commenced the battle of life as a portrait painter, occasionally producing also small studies of landscape scenery, for which, we are told, his price was from three to four guineas.

It has already been said that Wilson studied both Nature and Art during a six years' residence in Italy, and that Reynolds went early to Rome, Florence, and Venice, and both then and subsequently studied deeply the finest works of the old masters, which, no doubt, greatly influenced the Art of both these painters. But we are not told that Gainsborough ever left this country. He, therefore, had no opportunity of profiting by foreign Art, except such as was to be found, and to which he could gain access, in his own land. It must be remembered, moreover, that the time we are writing of, was before the foundation of the British Institution, with its annual gathering of the choicest pictures, and its annual school of copyists, and long before the foundation of the National Gallery with its accumulating Art treasures, spreading out to delight, stimulate, and instruct us, the finest works of the greatest men of all times. Visits

of casual inspection to private collections he might obtain, but any such advantages as those of his rivals were not accorded to the young man of eighteen, who was obliged to set up his easel, and begin thus early to labour for his daily bread.

It is a question, however, worth considering, how far the arts have been advanced by the greatly increased facilities afforded during the last half century, for studying and copying the works of others—not only of the old masters, but also of contemporary painters, extending to many of the permanent, and even some of the annual exhibitions. We cannot, at the present day, realize the position of a youth entering upon the pursuit of Art wholly deprived of the means of studying past or contemporary works, and thus obliged to commence from the beginning, and achieve for himself every new step in the road to excellence. But, of course, all limitations in the means of access to other pictures, and of obtaining Art information, must have a tendency to place him in this isolated position. Yet for healthy stimulus to exertion, and for showing by what has been done what may be done, for shortening the path in matters which are only means to the end sought, and not the end itself; for preventing conceit by the sight of excellence, and even by showing what to avoid, the opportunities afforded for seeing past and contemporary Art must be highly valuable.

On the contrary, it may be said that studying the works of others induces dependence, and tends to destroy individuality, originality, freshness of feeling, and even of execution. Moreover, while Art properly studied (in the manner, for instance, that Reynolds studied the

Flemings) enables the student to arrive readily at the rules and principles which have guided his predecessors in their treatment of subjects, in composition, arrangement of form, of colour, of light and dark, &c., it tends, no doubt, to fix him in dependence on like rules, and to render his art somewhat conventional. However this may be, the balance of advantage is very largely in favour of such study; it will help an original mind rapidly to reach the point at which to rest on its own resources, and where only average talent is possessed, will smooth the way past many difficulties. These remarks, however, do not refer to the now general practice of copying, which degrades Art to a trade, and is the resort of mere mediocrity and feebleness. To this we may refer more at length hereafter. Copying pictures will never be resorted to by the true artist, except as a means to acquire execution or handling, or to arrive at the technical process by which any peculiar quality of Art that has pleased him may be achieved.

We have shown that the age afforded few opportunities for those who did not travel; what opportunities there were, however, Gainsborough was not slow to avail himself of. Reynolds tells us, in his 14th discourse, that "to satisfy himself as well as others how well he knew the mechanism and artifice which they (the old masters) employed to bring out the tone of colour which we so much admired in their works, Gainsborough occasionally made copies from Rubens, Teniers, and Vandyke. What he thus learned, he applied to the originals of nature, which he saw with his own eyes, and imitated not in the manner of those masters, but his own." There are at Hampton Court two copies by him

from Rembrandt, which show that he was quite ready to study, by means of copying, where any benefit to his art was likely to arise. It is quite evident that he dwelt much upon the works of Vandyke, whose influence pervades the style of Gainsborough, giving it that tendency to silvery freshness which contrasts so strongly with the warmer and more golden tones of Reynolds. But the early age at which he began to practise his profession, the fact that he was never warped by foreign study, and the independent bent of his own character, kept him from following any of the old methods, and left him free to adopt a style and manner entirely his own. Sir Joshua says that "his handling or the manner of leaving the colours, or, in other words, the methods he used for producing the effect, had very much the appearance of an artist who had never learned from others the usual and regular practice belonging to the arts; but still a man of strong instinctive perception of what was required, he found out a way of his own to accomplish his purpose." Yet Sir Joshua had already told us that the painter had studied and even copied the works of the great Flemings, and those after Rembrandt are imitative of the master, and free from Gainsborough's own peculiarities of handling. That he was quite capable to paint decidedly if he pleased, many of his portraits give evidence; among others, the fine head of Gainsborough Dupont, now in the possession of Mr. G. Richmond, A.R.A., a work of rare executive beauty. But there is no doubt that the mind of a man of genius is as much shown in his executive handling as in the treatment of his subject, and that it is a part of his individuality. That Gainsborough adopted his peculiar manner ad-

visedly, we cannot doubt from a letter which he wrote to one of his sitters, a lawyer, who, perhaps, thought he had not finish enough for his money. "I don't think," he says, "it would be more ridiculous for a person to put his nose close to the canvas, and say the colours smelt offensive, than to say how rough the paint lies—for one is just as material as the other, with regard to hurting the effect and drawing of a picture. Sir G. Kneller used to say that pictures were not made to smell of."

That the manner he adopted is agreeable from the felicitous ease of execution which is its characteristic, we are sufficiently able to judge, and the President himself allows that "all these odd scratches and marks which, on a close examination, are so observable in Gainsborough's pictures; this chaos, this uncouth and shapeless appearance, by a kind of magic, at a certain distance, assumes form, and all the parts seem to drop into their proper places;" and he afterwards adds, that this "hatching manner" greatly contributed to the lightness of effect which is so eminent a beauty in his pictures, and "contributed even to that striking resemblance for which his portraits are so remarkable."

But are his pictures a chaos of uncouth and shapeless appearances? Is his handling so hatched and scratchy as the President would infer? On the contrary, many of his pictures are painted with extreme firmness and precision; nay, the truth is, however paradoxical the statement may appear, that Gainsborough had more executive power than his critic. Whatever may be the case with respect to his landscapes—which are not painted in face of Nature, but from drawings and from memory—in his portraits, when he had his

sitters before his eyes, his work was done at once without hesitation and without repetition. Many of his portraits, indeed, seem as if painted at one sitting; the head of Gainsborough Dupont, for instance, already alluded to, seems the work of one sitting. Many of his fancy pictures have the same onceness as "The Girl and Pitcher," belonging to Mr. Bassett of Tchedy, and others of his works.

In her Majesty's collection at Windsor there is also the commencement of two life-size half-length portraits of the Duke and the Duchess of Cumberland; for these the painter seems to have had but one sitting each, yet as far as the heads go, they are remarkably complete and very firmly handled. In the same collection there are seventeen life-size heads of the sons and daughters of his Majesty George III. It is hardly possible to speak too highly of the ease and freedom, yet firmness of execution of these works—they are of great purity in colour and of a sweetness and loveliness of expression most captivating; it is true that the painting is thin and sketchlike, as it mostly is in the works of Gainsborough, but there is not the slightest appearance of indecision or repetition. Of the extreme rapidity of his execution these seventeen works are a curious evidence; they are all dated on the back in the same month, and seem to have been done during a stay of that time at the castle. Now we know that Reynolds repeated his painting again and again. He said himself, apologetically, to Malone, "that his frequent alterations arose from a refined taste which could not acquiesce in anything short of a high degree of excellence." Yet the refined taste of Gainsborough, who did not repeat, who can gainsay? Examine carefully the expressive portrait

of Mrs. Siddons, now in the National Gallery, and it will be found that the *handling* is as easy and light as the expression and drawing are refined; added to which, the discriminative texture and broad realization of the striped silk dress, given without any sign of labour, is such that it will be hard to understand what is meant by the "odd scratches and marks" of his execution. When accessories are introduced into his pictures, they are often painted with such truth as delights us, while we at the same time enjoy the ease with which the painter has achieved them. The fiddle on the chair beside Dr. Fischer, in the portrait at Hampton Court, is a notable example—a connoisseur in the instrument would at once name the builder; a Dutchman would spend three months of labour and produce nothing like its reality. The whole-length portrait of Lady Ligonier, the property of Lord Rivers, is another example of decided and firm execution—but it would be tedious to mention the numerous instances of this quality.

Further to compare Gainsborough with Reynolds. It hardly seemed possible with the latter to paint less than life-size, or to achieve the greater refinement of execution necessary for small works. What does remain of this nature is very clumsy in execution; the sketch, for instance, at Windsor, of the marriage of George III., or the caricature of the school of Athens. It is true that the small picture, now belonging to Lord Cadogan, containing portraits of Lord Edgcumbe, George James Williams, and George Selwyn, friends of Horace Walpole, is an exception to this remark; but it has the appearance of great labour, and also indications of the labour of other hands than those of Sir Joshua. Gainsborough

could work in small as well as life-size, and that not in landscape only, where he is at times minute in his handling, but also in heads and figures—as in the "Cottage Children" in the Vernon collection, where the heads are miniature size and delicately wrought. Reynolds seems to have felt Gainsborough's executive facility as a great beauty, by which the painter gave freshness and vivacity to his works; but to have considered that he used it too freely, or exaggerated it beyond proper limits; if so, however, time has chastened down the peculiarity, as we know it has done in Constable's works, in the best of which it is hardly possible to understand now what could have been called "Constable's snow;" and time has, in some degree, also tamed into their proper subordination the hatchings of Gainsborough. The portraits of "Mrs. Sheridan," and "Mrs. Tickle" at Dulwich, or of "Mr. and Mrs. Hallet," belonging to Mr. Hilliard, of Uxbridge, are perhaps among those most notable for his "hatching manner;" but how little, even in these works, can we now feel that they are uncouth or chaotic in execution, while for daylight truth, for a sense of air all round the figure, as well as for loveliness and sweetness of expression, they are beautiful specimens of this great painter.

Gainsborough's facile and rapid execution has had one fortunate result, both for himself and posterity, in which he contrasts finely with Sir Joshua; his pictures have come down to us in a pure state, his portraits are rarely cracked, even in the darks. It results from rapid handling without repetition, that even with an imperfect medium the pictures do not suffer; thus the landscapes of this master, which, as has been already said, were

painted from memory and drawings, necessitating repetition, have suffered far more from the use of magylph than his figure-subjects and portraits, many of which are without any symptoms of vehicle cracks.

It is said that Sir Joshua at an Academy dinner gave "the health of Mr. Gainsborough, the greatest landscape painter of the day," to which Wilson, in his blunt, grumbling way, retorted, "Ay, and the greatest portrait painter, too." In Gainsborough's own time, the world of Art patrons seem to have employed his talents as a portrait painter, but to have disregarded his landscape art. Beechey said that "in Gainsborough's house in Pall Mall the landscapes stood ranged in long lines from his hall to his painting-room, and that those who came to sit to him for his portraits, on which he was chiefly occupied, rarely deigned to honour them with a look as they passed them." After his death, however, and the eulogium Reynolds had pronounced on his landscapes and rustic children, these came to be considered his finest works, and it is usual now to speak of him as a landscape rather than as a portrait painter. But it is more than doubtful whether Wilson did not judge more truly of his talent than Sir Joshua; and without wishing to place him above Reynolds in that painter's peculiar branch, it is certain that Gainsborough, in his finest portraits, formed a style equally original, and produced works that are every way worthy to take rank with those of the great President. They contrast with the latter in being more silvery and pure, and in the absence of that impasto and richness in which Reynolds indulged, but his figures are surrounded by air and light, and his portraits generally are easy and graceful without affectation.

Gainsborough's picture called the "Blue Boy," in which he endeavours to disprove Reynolds's dogma, was not, as is generally supposed, painted merely in a spirit of opposition. He found such treatments as a large breadth of cool light supporting the flesh, more than approximated to in his favourite Vandyke (see, for instance, the children of Charles I. at Windsor), and his own practice had been largely in this direction. Thus, in the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Hallett, on a large square whole-length canvas, the only warm colour is on the two faces, a cloud, and a portion of the ground; all the rest of the picture is green and neutral; and in the beautiful portrait of Mrs. Siddons, now a little warmed with time and varnish, an approximation to the same system may be perceived. This may have partly arisen from his landscape art, as his sense of "keeping" and of air around his figures certainly did. Reynolds's out-of-door portraits even have more of the light and dark of the studio than Gainsborough's indoor ones, which is due, in the works of the latter, to the cool colour of the flesh and the cool shadows, and partly to the greys on the retiring sides of the figure.

As to his practice, we are told that Gainsborough got far from his canvas while painting his portraits, and that he used brushes with very long handles. There is no doubt that he so placed the canvas and the sitter that, by retiring, he could view both at an equal distance, and then, by means of the long-handled tools, be enabled to give the general truth of tint and form without descending into minute details. Of his rapidity we have already spoken, and of the power of doing his work at once and without repetition. It has been said that a painter's

execution and handling is a part of his individuality, and how truly does this agree with the character of Gainsborough. We have but few details of his private life, but what do remain show him to have been a man of child-like nature, impulsive, yet simple to excess. Thus he indulged in his extreme love for music as heartily as a child. He could listen, with streaming eyes, to Colonel Hamilton playing on the violin, and, to induce him to proceed with his strain, give him, unreservedly, his picture of the "Boy at the Stile." He was surrounded with musical instruments of all kinds—his toys with which he recreated his leisure, and too often spent time that should not have been leisure. Did he hear a new viol or hautboy, a new lute or theorbo, he must at once purchase it, purchase the lesson-book for it, pay the professor at once to come with him and instruct him how to play it. Like children, he was hasty and impetuous, easily roused and easily pleased, going from moods of sadness suddenly into gaiety and hilarity. What curious naïveté and simplicity is shown in his letter to the lawyer before quoted, which, alluding to some prior conversation with a friend, he thus finishes:—"I little thought you were a lawyer when I said not one in ten were worth hanging. I told Clubb of that, and he seemed to think me lucky that I did not say one in a hundred. It is too late to ask your pardon now, but really, sir, I never saw one of your profession look so honest, and that's the reason I concluded you were in the wool trade." This simplicity, frankness, and quickness of feeling is characteristic of his works, and of the executive treatment both of his portraits and landscapes, on which we must now make a few remarks.

Gainsborough's fancy pictures of rustics and rustic

children form a connecting link between his landscape and his portrait art; some are truly figure-subjects, as the "Girl Feeding Pigs," the "Girl and Pitcher," while in others the landscape predominates, or the size and treatment of the figures is that of the landscape painter. In these works his good taste is as apparent as in his portraits. He took the children of the soil as he found them, even to their poverty and rags, and neither sought to give them sentiment nor prettiness, yet they charm us by their simple truth. The work done, it was so obviously right so to do it, that we are apt to overlook the merits of the artist who was not led aside to the stage pastorale of Watteau or Boucher, or the sensual insinuations of Greuze, yet managed deeply to interest us in simple and unimproved nature; to give us, as it were, the children of the breezy hayfield and the moor, redolent of hedge-row sweets; there is not a dream of the studio model about them, not the slightest feeling of a posed figure, but all is unconscious; the uncombed locks, the bare feet, the ragged dress, offend us not; the natural innocence and simplicity charm and delight us.

Reynolds says, "It is difficult to determine whether Gainsborough's portraits were most admirable for exact truth of resemblance, or his landscapes for a portrait-like representation of Nature,"—a strange judgment, written more with a view to a well-rounded period than to any true criticism on his rival's landscape art. It is certainly true that Gainsborough put aside altogether the early foundation of Dutch landscape on which he had begun to build, and took an entirely original view of Nature, both as to treatment and handling. Yet in the sense in which the artists of our day paint "portrait-like

representations of Nature," Gainsborough's art was anything but portrait-like. It has been objected to the great Italian landscape painters that they did not discriminate between one tree and another, but indulged in a "painter's tree." There is far more variety in those of our native artist, yet it would puzzle a critic to say what his trees really are, and to point out in his landscapes the distinctive differences between oak and beech, and elm. The weeds, too, in his foregrounds, have neither form nor species. On the margins of his brooks or pools a few sword-shaped dashes tell of reeds and rushes; on the banks of his road-side some broad-leaved forms catch the straggling sun-ray, but he cared little to go into botanical minutiæ, or to enable us to tell their kind. His rocks are certainly not truly stratified or geologically correct—how should they be?—he studied them, perhaps, in his painting-room from broken stones and bits of coal. The truth is, however, that he gave us more of Nature than any merely imitative rendering could do. As the great portrait painter looks beyond the features of his sitter to give the mind and character of the man, often thereby laying himself open to complaint as to his mere *likeness* painting; so the great landscape painter will at all times sink individual imitation in seeking to fill us with the greater truths of his art. It may be the golden sunset or the breezy noon, the solemn breadth of twilight, or the silvery freshness of morn—the something of colour, of form, of light and shade, floating rapidly away, that makes the meanest and most commonplace view at times startle us with wonder at its beauty, when treated by the true artist.

And did he study such merely from broken stones

and pieces of coal, from twigs and weeds in his painting-room? Vain idea! these were but the *mémoria technica*, that served to call up in his mind the thoughts he had fed on in many a lonely walk and leisure moment, when they of common clay plodded on and saw nothing—brooded on with a nature tuned to the harmonies of colour and of form, organized in a high degree to receive and retain impressions of beauty; and gifted with the power to place vividly before us by his art objects which had so delighted and pleased himself. Does any one think otherwise—let him try what can be got out of stones and coals; let him try how his memory will aid him, with such feeble helps as broken twigs and dry mosses, and then he may be able to appreciate, in a degree, how this man had won the mastery of paint and canvas, and turned their dross into the fine gold of true Art.

But in the history of British Art, the great merit of Gainsborough is, to have broken us entirely loose from old conventions. Wilson had turned aside from Dutch art to ennoble landscape by selecting from the higher qualities of Italian art; but Gainsborough early discarded all he had learned from the bygone schools, and gave himself up wholly to Nature; he was capable of delicate handling and minute execution, but he resolutely cast them aside lest any idol should interfere between him and his new religion. There may be traced a lingering likeness in his landscapes to those of Rubens; but this arose more from his generalization of details, his sinking the parts in the whole, than to any imitation of the great Fleming. It is like the recollection of some sweet melody which the musician weaves into his theme, all unconscious that it is a memory, and not a child of his own creation.

The pictures of Gainsborough, on the whole, stand better far than those by Reynolds. "Landscape with Cattle," a picture belonging to the Marquis of Lansdowne, is lovely for colour and freshness; it has been lined and repaired, but evidently had parted widely in the lights. Could any closeness of individual imitation give the truth, beauty of colour, and luminous sunlight of this picture? It somewhat reminds one of Zuccarelli, but how completely has Gainsborough sucked the honey and left the comb of the master! Viewed near, this picture is somewhat loose in texture, and hesitating in execution; the colour obtained by semi-transparents, as yellow-ochre, terra-verte, and ultramarine; while viewed at a proper distance, it is in perfect harmony.

In examining the landscapes of this painter, much must, however, be allowed for the present state of some of his works. Many are covered with a dark-brown varnish, obscuring the silvery freshness of their first state. This has cracked up in the darks and quite changed them. The "Market Cart" and the "Watering-place," as well as others in the national collection, are in a very different condition to that in which they left the easel. The world, however, has become so conservative, and has such belief in the picture-vamper's "golden tones," that so they must remain. It would be most impolitic to touch them until they have become too dark to be seen at all. However, with all allowances for change, and notwithstanding the great merit of his landscapes, to us he appears to have been greater as a figure and portrait painter than even as a landscape painter.

Gainsborough's contemporaries speak of him as fickle in character, lively and witty in society, but uncertain in

his friendships. He was one of the foundation members of the Royal Academy, but he took little interest in that institution, or share in its management; nor did he associate with his colleagues. From 1758 to 1774, he resided at Bath, where he practised as a portrait painter, and then coming to London, he occupied a part of Schomberg House, in Pall Mall. His estrangement from the Academy is attributed to the discussion which arose on his expressed wishes relative to the mode of hanging a picture sent by him for exhibition in 1784. The fate of this picture, which must have been one of his finest works, is lamentable. It was a group of the three princesses—the Princess Royal, the Princess Augusta, and the Princess Elizabeth. In sending it, Gainsborough acknowledges he is aware that by the laws of the Academy it must be hung above the line; but he adds, that while this law does very well for pictures of strong effect, "he cannot possibly consent to have it placed higher than eight and a half feet, because the likenesses and the work of the picture will not be seen higher." Finding the work had not been hung as he desired, it was, on his request, returned to him, and he never afterwards exhibited at the Academy. In after-years some officer of the Palace, in charge of the furniture, had the picture cut down to form a *supra-porte* in one of the rooms; and then finding, or fearing, that he had committed a very unwarrantable act, he burnt or destroyed the part which had been cut off, so that the portrait now exists as a dwarfed half-length. What remains is exceedingly beautiful, and the work, by a cruel fate, has been reduced to a size which would have allowed its exhibition below the line, as the painter had originally desired.

Northcote says, "Gainsborough was a natural gentleman, and with all his simplicity he had wit too." He died at his house in Pall Mall, in 1788. On his deathbed he was visited by Reynolds, with whom some coolness had existed, and the dying man, thinking to the last of his art, said to his brother painter—"We are all going to heaven, and Vandyke is of the party."

CHAPTER VII.

Foreigners who practised their Art in England in the Middle of the 18th Century—The History Painters—Cipriani—Angelica Kauffmann—Zoffany—Their Art described and its Influence on our School—The Landscape Painters—Zuccarelli—His Insipid Stage-like Nature—Yet Fashion and Success—De Loutherbourg—His Mannered though Powerful Landscapes—His Eidophusicon—Exhibitions and their Teaching.

In the preceding chapters an attempt has been made to show the state of art and artists at the death of Hogarth, and coincident with the efforts successfully made to found the Royal Academy. From the date of this last event, and, no doubt, arising principally from the opportunity which its periodic and well-attended exhibitions gave to artists to make known their works to the public, both pictures and painters began largely to increase. But, as we look down the annual list of exhibitors, ranging over the long period of one hundred years, how few do we find whose lives and labours have been thought worthy of any record; how still fewer those who have had a marked influence on Art, and whose names have become household words; the thousands dwindle down to tens, the tens into units. Many of those, moreover, whose names in their own day were in men's mouths, and who waxed rich through Court favour, ignorant patronage, fashion, or caprice, have fallen from their first estate; the newly founded Academy, through its schools and

while some who in their lifetime were despised or little appreciated, have at last obtained their due meed of honour. It is evidently no part of our task to unwrap mummies, or to try to decipher the *dead* art of a past age, but rather to take those few who have done honour to our school or influenced its progress, and try to explain their merits and the causes of their success.

Nor will this prove any limited labour, since it is characteristic of Englishmen that they are a people of marked individuality and independent thought, and this is characteristic of their art also. In other countries, as we have already shown, the artists ranged themselves as scholars in the studios of the great masters, and followed their precepts, transmitting them as traditions from age to age; hence there was more than a national similarity in their works. In the British school, on the contrary, each artist followed the bent of his own genius; and if for a while placed under a master in the beginning of his career, he soon broke loose from such teaching, and, throwing away much of the lore he had obtained, sought a way of his own as speedily as possible. Thus in the British school, although there is a marked national style, yet the manner is as varied as the men of mark it includes, and the art of each requires a separate consideration, each adding somewhat to the sum of differences that make up the whole and form the character of the school.

It is asserted that Academies are opposed to this individuality of Art, dwarfing its growth and replacing originality and freshness by a frigid and stereotyped manner,—a question we purpose to examine freely when the facts are before us, and we arrive at a period when

teaching, has had time to give evidence of any such tendency in the artists educated within its pale or influenced by its example and teaching; but our attention is first called to several painters who had already come before the public, and obtained reputation and practice prior to the foundation of the Academy, and whose art had taken its bent and aim before they joined that body as members, or placed their works as exhibitors on its walls. Nor is it to be supposed that at this period England was wholly unvisited by foreign artists; some such will be found in the list of the first members of the Academy; and as it may be thought they exerted some influence on the rising school, it will be proper to examine, in this chapter, how far this was the case; of these painters the following deserve an especial notice:— Giovanni Batista Cipriani, Angelica Kauffmann, and Johann Zoffany, among the figure painters; Francesco Zuccarelli and Philip de Loutherbourg among the landscape painters. These alone possessed that distinction and attained that eminence which would lead us to infer any durable impress on the character of our art.

Giovanni B. Cipriani, R.A., (B. 1727, D. 1785,) was a Florentine, descended from an ancient Tuscan family. He became acquainted with Sir W. Chambers in Rome, and on his return in 1755 accompanied him to London. Here he married an English lady with a moderate fortune, and actively pursued his profession for nearly thirty years in close fellowship with our artists. He was one of the two teachers appointed for the Duke of Richmond's gallery; and the English school is, perhaps, indebted to him for some of the grace that tempered the rude vigour of its first founders, and for that attention

to the figure which led to greater refinement in drawing. In his day he was esteemed the first historical painter, outrivalling the jovial Frank Hayman, yet he painted few pictures in oil. His attempts at high art were weak, and his pictures exhibit the perfection of inane generalization; he treated his subject with an insipid elegance which took away all individuality. It has been shown that English art derived little from the Flemish painters who had practised among us; and it cannot be said that Cipriani's art—the worn-out and effete art of modern Italy—added much to the rough and rising school which had Hogarth, Gainsborough, Reynolds, and Wilson for its founders. His reputation is a proof of the low state of public taste when it was achieved; his feeling for colour was gay, even gaudy; and his chiaroscuro had still less merit. It is by his drawings that he is best known, chiefly in pen and ink, but sometimes coloured; they are full of forced elegance and pretty fancies; his females and children, models of unmeaning prettiness in art and taste. The influence of his works on the public mind is seen by their wide diffusion in the engravings of his friend and countryman Bartolozzi (also a member of the Royal Academy), through whose labours their reputation has extended even to our own time.

Angelica Kauffmann, R.A., (B. 1740, D. 1807,) the next on our list of foreigners, arrived in this country just before the foundation of the Academy. "The fair Angelica," as the artists gallantly called her, was a native of Coire in the Swiss Grisons. She showed a very precocious taste for drawing, and, after travelling for her improvement through the chief Italian cities, came to London to seek her maiden fortunes in 1765,

heralded by a brilliant reputation. Clever and amiable she at once found a kind patron and protectress in the young Queen Charlotte, and was admitted to a high place in the ranks of Art. She is said to have looked with tenderness upon Reynolds, as to whose sensibility gossip has been dumb; but another painter, Nathaniel Dance, led by her charms, wandered hopelessly through Italy in her train. A dramatic interest attaches to her unhappy marriage. Mistress of the German, French, Italian, and English languages; excelling in music, both vocal and instrumental, she added to learning, Art, and to all, refined, amiable and affectionate manners, and was not only famed but wealthy; yet she was deceived into marriage in 1769 by the servant of a Swedish nobleman who passed himself off for his master. Separated from this impostor, the object both of sympathy and scandal, she continued in the practice of her profession till his death in 1782, when, at the age of sixty-two, with but little more prudence, she married Zucchi, a Venetian artist, and retaining her own maiden name, retired to Rome. There, after twenty-five years passed with undiminished reputation, she died and was buried with unusual pomp—above one hundred ecclesiastics in the habits of their different orders, the members of the literary societies in Rome, and many of the nobility walking in the procession, the pall supported by young females dressed in white, and two of her best pictures carried immediately after her corpse.

But we have digressed—led aside, like the many eulogists of her day, by her charms and her talents. Her works were gay and pleasing in colour, yet weak and faulty in drawing, her male figures particularly

wanting bone and individuality. They found favour, however, with a large class, although they lacked the vigour and originality which give life, and her fame was not for posterity. Her influence is reflected in our day by the numerous engravings from her works. Six classical subjects, with several others, were engraved by Ryland; Schiavonetti engraved a number in the dot manner; Bartolozzi also; and it is a proof of her great popularity that Boydell published above sixty plates from her works. The ceiling of the Council-room of the Royal Academy is by her hand. In the present day her works are of small value, inferior even to the later pictures of West. They seem to contain but the creatures of her own brain, —beings which evidence a common parentage and family likeness, whether representing the gods and goddesses of antiquity, or those deities who in her day ruled the world of fashion. If any progress were to be made in Art the British school did well to forget her.

The third foreigner whom we have named is *Johann Zoffany, R.A.*, descended from a Bohemian family, but a native of Frankfort, where he was born in 1733 or 1735. He came to England when about thirty years of age, and it is said at first found little encouragement, and was reduced to great distress. On the foundation of the Royal Academy, however, in 1768, which, if the above dates are correct, must have been within three or four years of his arrival, we find him enrolled among the forty original members by direction of their patron George III., so that he had already obtained royal notice and favour. His early works, judging from some small whole lengths in the royal collection, were cold and slaty, heavily painted, and with no impasto or textural

variety in execution, but during his stay in England he improved almost into a colourist. He adopted a small scale for his figures, and usually painted subjects which necessitated a careful study of individual nature, and consequently followed the direction of the rising school—such as theatrical groups with portraits of the leading actors, &c.; and it is great praise to say that he was not led into a stilted manner, but that his portraits have the truthful air of nature. In his large compositions, such as the group of "The Members of the Royal Academy," or "The Tribune at Florence," with portraits of distinguished connoisseurs inspecting the works, there is a little want of keeping and relief; but the execution is excellent and the finish careful without littleness, while the general colour of the work is agreeable and the likenesses truthful. When he painted life-size he was apt to be wooden, and such works have the appearance of being beyond his power.

In 1781 he left England to push his fortune in India, and during some years' residence at Lucknow continued to practise his art on the same class of subjects that had occupied his pencil in England, combining incident and portraiture, such as "The Cock-fight," "An Indian Tiger Hunt," &c. He returned to London about 1796 with a competent fortune, and continued to practise his art, but, whether weakened by the effect of climate or advancing in age, his latter works are of less interest than those of his early years. He died in 1810. It is probable that his careful manner of painting, his attention to accurate costume, the individuality of his heads, and the general truthfulness of his backgrounds, had some influence on the young artists who, in the next

century, were to give a strong impress to the English school; but there is little doubt that the best qualities of his art were obtained in this country, and that he gained here as much as he gave to the fellow-artists of his adopted land.

We have already described the art of Gainsborough and Wilson; the freshness and novelty of the one, the breadth and grandeur of the other. While these great men were laying the foundation of a better future for English landscape art than the Claude-like imitations of the Smiths and others, two foreigners were also practising their art in England with a pecuniary success not accorded to our great native painters. One of these, *Francesco Zuccarelli, R.A.*, was born in Tuscany in 1702, and had already obtained an European reputation before his arrival in London in 1752. It is greatly to the credit of his discernment as well as of his generous feelings that he appreciated the talent of Wilson when in Venice, and advised him to leave portraiture for landscape. Nor is he to be blamed if the public and the artists of his day, lacking his own discernment, sought his works in preference to those of their countryman; nevertheless, it must have been exceedingly galling to Wilson, who even when neglected and overlooked was conscious of his own talent, to see a foreigner of inferior ability rapidly amassing a fortune whilst he was left in want of bread. Zuccarelli soon became fashionable in England, and led the taste both of the artists and the public. Carey, in his *Thoughts*, printed at Manchester in 1808, says, "No artist gave so many charms to the lovely serenity of a rural scene as Zuccarelli." In our day we consider his rurality rather that of the stage or the novel than of

nature; Carey allows, however, that "beyond the *soothing* view of village or pastoral life, and the cloudless tranquillity of May-day, Zuccarelli's *bland* imagination never freely wandered;" to us the blandness of his imagination is rather a mawkish and pretty insipidity, and his pictures a pistaccio of oft-repeated parts.

Zuccarelli was one of the original members of the Royal Academy (founded six years after his arrival in London), and so also was Richard Wilson; but while the one was unable to obtain money to purchase a canvas when a kind friend obtained him a commission, the other must have been unable to overtake the commissions of his admirers; for there is hardly a collection of any note, formed at that time, which did not contain one or more of his works. We know that Wilson was advised by his brother artists, if he wished to succeed, to leave his own for the lighter style of Zuccarelli; and we can well imagine the morose contempt with which he received the advice. A much-read modern critic tells us that "though a thousand modifying instances interfere with the action of the general rule, yet taking one case with another we shall very constantly find the *price* which the picture commands in the market a pretty fair standard of the artist's rank of intellect." This may be read two ways; if we refer it to the value of Zuccarelli's pictures at the time they were painted, then his standard of intellect must indeed have been high as compared with neglected Richard Wilson. With Zuccarelli this feeble and worn-out art declined and finally died away before the vigorous advance made by landscape painting in this country. Our artists began to look to Nature, and despised works from which nothing was to be learned but an easily

acquired facility of re-combining over and over again, as in a myriorama, stale thoughts and used-up compositions—an end which the vigour of Morland, with the thoroughly English character of his pictures, served to hasten. Zuccarelli died in Florence in 1788.

Philip de Loutherbourg, R.A., was another foreigner who practised in England as a landscape painter while her own sons were struggling to form a school and obtain a name. He was born at Strasbourg in 1740, and came to England in 1771, having previously arrived at fame in Paris, where he had been elected a member of the French Academy. He was a landscape painter of great power, although his art was very conventional, and his works have little finesse of execution or of truth to nature. On his arrival in England he was engaged by Garrick to design scenes for Drury Lane Theatre at a salary of 500*l.* a year. His ready and facile execution and power of artificial composition suited this branch of art; but such facility is rather a curse than a benefit, and the scene painter always predominated over the artist. His art, indeed, was essentially dramatic, well calculated to seize the imagination of the superficial observer, and captivate the public. He was a skilful draughtsman both in landscape and the figure; but trusting to his ready memory he needed or sought little reference to the great teacher Nature, hence his colouring is often unpleasant—hot skies contrasted with cold slaty grays and greens. Thus Peter Pindar writes—

> "And Loutherbourg, when Heaven wills,
> To make brass skies and golden hills,
> With marble bullocks in glass pastures grazing,
> Thy reputation, too, will rise,
> And people gazing with surprise,
> Cry, 'Monsieur Loutherbourg is most amazing.'"

Though mannered and conventional, his art was never feeble; it is impossible to overlook the vigour with which he wrought, the motion and action of his figures, and the skill with which they are placed in his landscapes. In his picture of "The Victory of the First of June under Lord Howe," which has been finely engraved by Woollett, we have the various incidents of a battle scene given with fire and animation. The confusion of a sea fight, the terrors of the enemy and of the waves, are contrasted with great truth. The same may be said of the two pictures of "Wærley Common," in the corridor of Windsor Castle, although here the figures are less principal than in the "Victory of Lord Howe."

De Loutherbourg was elected an associate in 1780, and a full member of the Royal Academy in 1781. There is no question that his facile execution and the great vigour with which he painted, had many charms for his brother artists, and influenced for a time the practice of the school; but they soon passed away when the habit of referring to nature as the fountain of freshness in art obtained a hold on those who practised it. He no doubt contributed greatly to the improvement of scene painting, for which his art and genius were peculiarly suited; and when, on an attempt to reduce his salary, he left the theatre, he planned his "Eidophusicon," which all the world went to Spring Gardens to see, and in amazement admired his moving picture, his shifting effects of calm and storm, and the illusion produced by the accurate imitation of the sound of the distant minute gun, the approaching thunder, the dash of the waves, and their roar as they broke on the pebbly beach. Nor was he without his mad peculiarities. Late in life

he became a disciple of the notorious Brothers. Like him he professed the gift of prophecy, and the power to heal diseases; but this proved too much for his skill, and the deluded mob broke his windows. He died in 1812, and found a quiet rest near the great Hogarth in Chiswick churchyard.

We have spoken of the state of the fine arts in England in their extreme decadence, and of their new life under Hogarth and his great successors who aided in founding the Royal Academy. These latter, besides the foreigners already mentioned, had many contemporaries, who were only indebted to the Academy for the knowledge which accrues from companionship, and the yet higher teaching which a public exhibition, now for the first time established, is calculated to afford. This exhibitional teaching has hardly been sufficiently estimated, yet it enables artists to see their own faults and shortcomings—to weigh their own powers with the works of their brethren, hung side by side for comparison and criticism, thus affording a sure cure for conceit and self-satisfaction, and the best incentive to progress.

Much has been said of the evils of exhibitions, and their injury to the arts, in that they induce artists to paint up to exhibition pitch, to force their effects to the injury of others and eventually of themselves; but little has been allowed as to the instruction exhibitions afford. An artist looking at his work in his own room, favourably placed, the light specially adapted for its display, and with no surrounding works to vie with it or attract attention from it, is apt to think better of it than perhaps it deserves; but when his picture is placed on the walls of an exhibition, surrounded

with others full of freshness and novelty, he sees all his own defects and shortcomings—he judges himself, weighs forced actions, false contrasts, and overstrained expressions, and, if he has the true spirit of a painter, learns a lesson that is vastly useful to his future progress. Every artist knows that the first day of viewing an exhibition of which his own works form a part is a day of depression. Each thinks his own far worse than he had believed, and it needs some hours of reflection on his ability to remedy defects in future, to reassure him as to his own position and his own powers.

In the succeeding chapters we purpose to examine the state of historical and portrait painting, landscape and animal painting, at this transitional period when the influence of the new Academy could only be felt in its exhibitions, and the fruits of its teaching were as yet but ripening.

CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST HISTORY PAINTERS OF THE ENGLISH SCHOOL.

Benjamin West, P.R.A.; James Barry, R.A.; and John Singleton Copley, R.A.—Their Art Education and Early Life Compared—West and his Religious Subjects—Their High Contemporary Reputation and Subsequent Neglect—Their Merits and Defects—Barry, his Classic Bias—Study of the Antique and Italian Art—Opinion upon his Merits and Works—Critical Description of his Great Work at the Society of Arts—His Unfortunate Death—Copley—His Theme the Heroism of his Own Time—Criticism upon his Death of Lord Chatham—Major Pierson's Victory and Death—Relief of Gibraltar—His Fortunate Choice of Subjects—Manner of Painting.

CONTEMPORARY fame gave to the historical works of Frank Hayman, in the existing dearth, a rank which was not afterwards assigned to them, or to the higher merits of Sir James Thornhill's decorative paintings; and the claim to have possessed a painter of history in the English school was deferred for nearly two generations.

We have already said that Sir Joshua Reynolds painted several historical pictures, as his "Ugolino," "Macbeth," "Infant Hercules," and some others. But such hours as he could spare from his sitters, he loved much more to devote to fancy subjects; and he told his pupil, Northcote, that "history cost him too dear." Other and younger men, however, stimulated by the love of fame, and less regardful of the cost, were anxious to occupy the field which the successful portrait painter had found beyond his power, or the time at his command.

Three of these, West, Barry, and Copley, young men of nearly the same age, within a year or two of thirty when the first exhibition at the Royal Academy took place, deserve especial notice from their continuous and life-long efforts to produce works at least of high aim; one of them struggling on through years of toil to complete a self-imposed task, a series of pictures which he had undertaken to paint almost gratuitously; and each of the three deserving credit for the grandeur of his subjects, if their conception and execution were in some instances less noble than the choice demanded.

A word or two must be said on the art education of these three painters before we advert to the men individually and notice their works. And, first, as neither of the three was academically educated, so can neither their faults nor their excellences be considered the result of the Academy system; nor were they educated in the atelier of any great artist, but each learnt his art individually and alone. Thus three artists instructed more variously and, from their early associations, more separated from art influences while obtaining their elementary knowledge, can hardly be found. They were not likely to be better grounded in the mere art language that was to give them the power of expressing their ideas, to be better draughtsmen, better painters, or better colourists; but were they, on this account, more original, more prone to examine Nature for themselves, and to seize new modes of representing her beauties, or revealing her secrets to the uninitiated? One advantage they had in common. In early life, soon after entering upon the practice of their art, and when their elementary training may be supposed to have been

completed, each visited Italy, making a more or less prolonged stay. West went there when twenty-two years of age, and was three years in the various capitals of that country; Barry in his twenty-fifth year, and remained nearly four years; but Copley was in his thirty-seventh year, and stayed only one year in the land of art. What influence had these visits on their future art and practice? Barry and West, who went when young, and made the longest stay in Italy, will be found most imbued with the desire to excel in the highest walk of art, most scholastic in their treatment of it; Copley the freshest and most original. Barry, who, from his religious opinions and influences, and the great admiration he expressed of Raphael and Michael Angelo, might have been expected to apply himself to religious art, was led away by classic influences while abroad, and at home by the only opportunity afforded him of exhibiting his powers. He devoted his life to a work on social culture, of which the heathen myths and sports are made to form the principal groundwork, and a half-classic Elysium the object and end. He, no doubt, owed his enthusiasm and devotion to art to the noble works of the master minds of Italy; and he toiled on, under good report and evil, at a work, which, if too high for his art-power or mental culture, he yet treated in a manner of his own, and with little obligation to the inventions of the great painters whom he reverenced he completed an epic in art, unique of its kind, the first, and, so far, the last which his country has produced. West was of a religious faith, which rejects material aids to worship and rests wholly on spirituality, which eschews the use of arms and objects to the warrior caste. In obedience to the claims

upon his talents he passed his life in alternately painting religious and heroic subjects, cherished, however, with the substantial consolation of his sovereign's favour and 1,500*l.* a year to enable him to devote his heart and soul to his labours.

Both these men seem to have received their art inspiration from the Florentine school, but from Raphael rather than from Michael Angelo. Yet it is singular how little they obtained beyond the conventionalities of art, such as composition, grouping, &c.; and this is far more evident in the case of West than of Barry; even the action, conventional character, and draperies of the Scripture personages of his pictures are weakly reproduced by him, with little of the freshness of the Italian, or of the individual truth that is always found even in his most ideal heads. West seems, in fact, to have taken up the art at the point to which the imitators of Raphael had brought it; and with all the talmudic traditions that had been foisted upon it by the Bolognese Academy, by Carlo Maratti and Raphael Mengs.

Both visited Venice, but how little did they, or, perhaps, could they, profit by the noble works of that school! West seems almost insensible to colour; and Barry to have mistaken the brown tone of time and varnish, for the glories they did but entomb. He appeared indeed insensible to his defect in this respect, and said in reply to some objections on his colouring, while at Rome, "When they attacked my colouring, I went to study Titian, and soon had the pleasure of seeing them silent upon that head." Of the two, Barry was the most improved by the study of the great Italian. West only attained to an imitative facility and barren power that

enabled him, during a long life, to cover acres of canvas with much that is insipid and mediocre, leaving him no time to produce one work, hardly one figure evidencing intense feeling or keen perception. This very facility led him to a painty and mechanical execution which repels the spectator, makes him long for less respectability and more vigour, and, if at the cost of a little coarseness, for something to find fault with or something to praise. West drew well, cast his draperies well, painted his picture satisfactorily throughout; but no part excites us to admiration or enthusiasm, or invites our special attention. He rarely seems to have given to his subjects or figures more consideration than was required, having fixed their place in the picture, to paint them by rule. This he did with a placid facility that caused him as little trouble as his work gave pleasure to the spectator. We are told of the long months the great picture by Leonardo remained untouched while the painter was meditating on and preparing to paint the head of our Lord, and no doubt he gave proportionate study and thought to the other personages of his sacred subject; but what a work of sublime and intense individuality was produced in the end. In no spirit of unfairness would we put this great work in comparison with that by our English painter in the National Gallery; the comparison may indeed provoke a smile; but it at once illustrates our criticism. West's picture might be the work of as many days as Da Vinci's of years, and the characterless generalities, the easy prettinesses of the former, are due to that satisfied facility we have described.

It has been said that "no one who sees the picture of the Victors of Olympia," can deny that Barry had

a thorough knowledge of the human figure, or that he was a correct and scientific draughtsman; this, however, is speaking far too unrestrictedly. Barry, while in Rome, seems to have made the proportions of the classic figure his study, rather than that consideration of its structure which would have given him power to impart life and motion to his figures. We are told that his mode of study was singular, that "in drawing from the antique he always employed an instrument called a delineator, not aiming to make academic drawings, but a sort of diagram on which a scale of proportions was established, to which he might at all times refer as a guide and authority." On his return he seems to have adopted a proportion, which, from the smallness of the heads and extremities, and the largeness of the limbs and trunk, he supposed would give his figures grandeur and power. They are apt, on the contrary, to look clumsy and ponderous; and, from the mode of study described, there is no clearness of form and contour, none of the appearance of breed and training in his figures, which, at the least, we should look for in the athletæ of the Olympian Games; but rather the sense of stuffed roundness, as of the limbs of lay figures. The muscles are rarely in true action, but a posed equality throughout his figures gives them an appearance of unreality inconsistent with the action they are intended to represent.

Singleton Copley began *his* life as a portrait painter, and was in mature years and the full practice of his art when he visited Italy and finally settled in England. He continued here to devote himself to portraiture, and even his historical works are allied to his early practice; of this "The Death of Chatham" is an extreme example,

his "Arrest of the Five Members in the Time of Charles I." is also stated to contain fifty-eight historical likenesses, and "The Death of Major Pierson" has something of the character of monumental portraiture. This description of art led him to seek individual truth in his pictures, and to ally himself rather to the new school of reference to nature, than to the old one, dozing over the repetition of stale subjects, and the traditions of the great masters. Hence there is more freshness and novelty in his inventions than in those of West, and less of that facile insipidity that arises from works grounded on old art rather than on the painter's own observations of nature. Copley's portraits, as far as we know them, are rather of the respectable school of Hudson, Ramsay, and Cotes, but certainly better than theirs, and superior to the portraits of West. His group of the Princesses Mary, Sophia, and Amelia, daughters of George III., painted in 1785, and now in Buckingham Palace, if not equal to the portraits of Reynolds and Gainsborough, is at least the nearest approach to them, and has action, colour, drawing, and expression beyond those of any other contemporary painter. In his historical works Copley was, as has been inferred, but little influenced by his visit to Italy; educated in art in a land where the means and appliances were few, he was a good and intelligent draughtsman, treated his subjects simply and naturally and with sufficient individuality to carry us into the scene represented. His best work, "The Death of Major Pierson," stands well in comparison with the more celebrated work of West—"The Death of General Wolfe."

Having premised thus far as to the education of these

three distinguished painters, we will add such a brief account of the life and works of each as will bear upon the practice of his art and its influence upon our rising school.

Benjamin West, P.R.A., the descendant of English Quaker ancestors, was born in 1738. His birth took place in Pennsylvania, where art was then unknown, and is said, we believe without any foundation, to have been attended with portents of future eminence. He seems, however, to have been born an artist. From the Indians he obtained his first pigments—red and yellow, to which, from his mother's stores, he added indigo, thus possessing the primary colours. His brush he made from hairs cut from the cat's back. He had already, when in his seventh year, drawn a likeness of his sister, whose cradle he was set to watch, which earned for him the fond kisses of his surprised mother. Showing much of the resolution of the old race from which he sprang, and proudly determined to follow Art, he declared that a painter was the companion of kings and emperors. At sixteen, his Quaker relatives, impressed with his intelligence and the genius with which they believed him especially gifted, allowed him, after much discussion, to follow a profession which, according to their peculiar tenets, was at least doubtful. When this discussion was ended the women rose and kissed the young artist, and the men one by one laid their hands on his head, and from that time the painter felt himself dedicated, like Samuel of old, to high and holy subjects for his art. But this incident has been so much exaggerated, we are unable to separate the truth from the fiction.

West nevertheless began with painting portraits—first in his native city, and then in New York, where, meeting

with encouragement and friends, he was enabled to travel to Europe, deeply impressed with the greatness of his art mission. Arrived at Rome, the young American was the object of much curiosity, and the Cardinal Albani, who was blind, asked, when introduced to him, whether he was black or white. The virtuosi crowded about him to note his sensations on first seeing the great works of the capitol, and to watch their effect on the virgin mind of the genius from the new world. Dazzled by his reception, more and more impressed with the passion for elevated art, he visited Florence and Bologna, and, as we have already said, remained in Italy during three years.

He arrived in London in the summer of 1763, provided with good introductions, and preceded by a somewhat exaggerated reputation. In 1766 we find him exhibiting his picture of "Orestes and Pylades," which is now in the National Gallery. Of this work Northcote, in his *Life of Reynolds*, says, "As anything in history was at that period an almost unexampled effort, this picture became a matter of much surprise. His house was soon filled with visitors from all quarters to see it, and those among the highest rank who were not able to come to his house to satisfy their curiosity, desired his permission to have it sent to them. Nor did they fail every time it was returned to him, to accompany it with compliments of the highest commendation on its great merits. But the most wonderful part of the story is, that notwithstanding all the bustle and commendation bestowed upon this justly admired picture, by showing which Mr. West's servants gained 30*l.*, yet no one mortal ever asked the price of the

work, or so much as offered to give a commission to paint another subject." This statement is, however, incorrect, and may be attributed to Northcote's cynical nature, for we know that about this time West received commissions from the Bishop of Bristol, the Bishop of Worcester, and the Archbishop of York, Dr. Drummond, for whom he painted "Agrippina with the Ashes of Germanicus." This work so pleased the bishop that he introduced the young artist to George III., who commissioned him to paint "The Departure of Regulus from Rome," which was the commencement of a long course of royal patronage, extending over thirty-three years of West's life, and the help by which he easily achieved present fame; for the public rushed to see, and to praise works which, if above their comprehension, were painted for a king. Fuseli tells us that West used to remark, "There were but two ways of working successfully in this country, the one to paint for the king, the other to meditate a scheme of your own." The first was now open to him, and he was careful to maintain the position he had obtained.

On the formation of the Royal Academy in 1768, West was one of the foundation members, and year after year contributed three or four works to the exhibition. On the death of Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1792, he was elected president, and delivered an inaugural address, which was much applauded, but which his biographer tells us "must have cost him little thought, as it dwelt but on two topics—the excellence of British art, and the gracious benevolence of his Majesty." On this occasion, firm to his religious opinions, he declined the honour of knighthood. When his royal patron fell

permanently under the illness which ended in his death, West's labours for the Crown were terminated, but he afterwards painted many religious subjects, some of them among his best works, such as "Christ Healing the Sick," now in the National Gallery; "Christ Rejected," exhibited in 1814; and "Death on the Pale Horse," in 1817. He died on the 11th March, 1820, in his eighty-second year.

West's compositions were more studied than natural, the action often conventional and dramatic, the draperies, although learned, heavy and without truth. His colour often wants freshness and variety of tint, and is hot and foxy. His courage in undertaking works of deep importance and magnitude far exceeded his powers, and his works fail to make an impression on us commensurate with their ambitious aims. This partly arises from the absence of imitation and individuality in his pictures, but more especially from his want of power to identify himself with the place and time, and the *dramatis personæ* represented; perhaps also in a degree from the dogma laid down by Reynolds that in historic art the imitative rendering of the textures of materials and draperies should be avoided. No doubt such imitative renderings carried too far tend to meanness, and to distract the mind from the real incidents of the painter's subject; but West so repudiated imitation that his flesh, his draperies, and his back-grounds were all painted of the same texture, and therefore his pictures are flat, painty, and unattractive. They contain none of those qualities of richness which arise from the juxtaposition of absorbent with reflective substances, and render the pictures of the Venetian school so powerful and pleasing to the

eye. From this want of individuality, his heads are all of one mould, and have little savour of humanity in them, and therefore do not interest us. It is true he used the model for his works, but it was rarely well chosen, and the same models played many parts in the same picture, changed and modified by the painter, until all individuality taken out of them, they are vapid and characterless. His back-grounds are very tame, and there is a great want of contrasts in his pictures, which are pervaded by a level mediocrity too good to be passed over, and too weak to excite much emotion. The hands have been said to be second only to the face as vehicles of expression. West made great use of them for this purpose, but the actions he chooses are often stale and conventional—seldom those which, deeply characteristic, tell so strongly the emotions passing in the mind of the actor. He rarely carries us back to the time and nationality of his subject, and with the exception of his "Death of Wolfe," his "Penn and the Indians," and one or two subjects wherein a degree of portraiture is requisite, apostle and Roman citizen, knight and sailor have very much in common at his hands.

How then shall we account for the great reputation he enjoyed—if we attribute it to Court patronage, and the kindness of his Royal patron, we are at a loss to explain the opinions of his brother artists—what can we say to the opinion of Sir Thomas Lawrence, that "his compositions were profoundly studied and executed with the most facile power, and not only superior to any former productions of English Art, but far surpassing contemporary merit on the Continent, and unequalled at any period below the schools of the Carracci?" The words

are cautious and sound large, but probably do not mean a great deal. Yet, Sir Thomas was a sincere man, and three years after West's death lamented that his accumulated labours, exhibited in his gallery, had been totally neglected and deserted. Later, Sir Martin Shee, P.R.A., speaks of him in 1836, "as the greatest historical painter since the days of the Carracci." Yet there was one at least among West's contemporaries who dissented from such opinions, for we are told that on West's re-election to the president's chair, after his temporary secession in 1803, the votes were unanimous except one—only one—which was in favour of Mrs. Lloyd, then an academician, and that Fuseli, when taxed with giving this vote, said, "Well, suppose I did, she is eligible to the office, and is not one old woman as good as another?" West's collection, to which Lawrence referred, was sold by Robins in 1829, and the 181 pictures which it comprised, realized 19,137 guineas; among them his "Death upon the Pale Horse" fetched 2,000 guineas, and his "Christ Rejected," for which he is said to have refused 8,000 guineas, 3,000 guineas. Now his works have almost ceased to have a market value with collectors, and would only command furniture prices.

But West, too highly rated in his day, has been perhaps too much depreciated in ours; we must recur to the state of art prior to his time, in order to understand the judgment of his contemporaries. After Verrio and Laguerre (the latter no mean artist, as his wall-paintings at Marlborough House will show) came Thornhill and Hayman, and it may well be supposed, that compared with their works, West's pictures were a great advance. The galleries of the wealthy of that day were

filled with pictures by the Bolognese masters, which were then the fashion; while the learned compositions from the flowing pencil of our countryman, exercised on subjects of history and religion more in accordance with English feelings, affected the multitude far more than the everlasting Madonnas and legends of Catholic art—the black and dingy pictures of that equally eclectic school. Even the facility with which West worked, and the number of pictures he produced, was a wonder to his contemporaries, and before the toning process of time and of picture doctors, with their cataplasms of varnish, had deprived West's pictures of their freshness, there was a brightness in his *al primo* execution, now totally lost to us.

It may be said for him, that compared with the art of our day his aim at least was high, and it is to our shame that religious art almost died out with him, for, with the exception of Hilton, Etty, Haydon, and, we may add, Martin, who did not sell their works, religious subjects have been eschewed since his death. Such works are naturally judged by a higher standard than pictures of common life or domestic incident, and both painters and critics, in comparing West's pictures as to colour and surface execution, with works of imitative finish, and that which is more especially allied to the decorative in art, are apt, in the absence of these technical merits, to overlook the existence of some higher qualities which they do possess.

The English school certainly owed to West the abandonment of classic costume in the treatment of heroic subjects of our own time; and perhaps also his gentle and dignified life served to set the taste for

more refined manners in his brother artists. Since then we have fewer of the roystering school, who mistake debauchery and wildness for genius; and the artist has risen in the social scale. Otherwise, West's art, his position in the Academy as its president, and his continued employment by the King, have left little trace on our school, in which he had few followers; and it is well it is so. Yet it is painful to reflect that such a distinguished reputation has so soon passed away; let us hope, however, not from caprice, but from an improved taste and more extended knowledge of what is really good and true. As it was, West, in living to the age of eighty-two, had almost outlived his fame. We have wished to treat, with tender justice, a falling reputation, and we only quote, to repudiate them, the words of his own countryman, Nathaniel Hawthorne, in his last work, *Our Old Home*:—

"Over the altar," in the chapel of Greenwich Hospital, "hangs a picture by West. I never could look at it long enough to make out its design, for this artist (although it pains me to say it of so respectable a countryman,) had a gift of frigidity, a knack of grinding ice into his paint, a power of stupefying the spectator's perceptions, and quelling his sympathy, beyond any other limner that ever handled a brush. In spite of many pangs of conscience, I seize this opportunity to wreak a life-long abhorrence upon the poor, blameless man, for the sake of that dreary picture of Lear—an explosion of frosty fury—that used to be a bugbear to me in the Athenæum Exhibition. Would fire burn it I wonder?"

Another countryman of West—Dunlop—writing on

the Fine Arts in America, says:—"It is remarkable that Cunningham, when speaking of West, always represents him as a quaker, although he has, with most poetical liberty, made him a soldier, and a captain leading soldiers in an enterprise of danger. We are told that 'he went from his gallery in Newman Street, to Windsor and back again, with the staid looks of one of the brethren going to and returning from chapel.' Now this is as purely a fiction as his captain's commission and his military achievements. In Newman Street, or at Court, West looked and dressed like other gentlemen of the time." . . . . "He was not a quaker in manner, dress, conversation, or conduct, after his arrival in England—at least we can speak of our own knowledge after the year 1783—and was as unquaker-like as any man in Great Britain."

What West undertook in religious and historic art, *James Barry, R.A.*, attempted for classic or heroic art, and in some respects more successfully, because with greater originality. He was a native of Cork, born in 1741, the son of a coasting trader who kept a small public-house. Determined from boyhood to be a painter, and disgusted with the sea after two or three coasting trips, he secretly followed the strong bent of his genius, and made rude attempts in chalk upon any smooth surface within his reach. After such small help as he could get in his native city, he made his way to Dublin, and there found sudden distinction by a picture which he painted and exhibited—"The Conversion and Baptism of an Irish Prince by St. Patrick." Here the youth and his work attracted the notice of Edmund Burke, who advised and befriended him. Then after a short continuance of his studies in Dublin, he went to London under the guid-

ance of Burke, in 1764, in his twenty-third year. For some time he subsisted by copying in oil the drawings of Mr. Stuart, better known as "Athenian Stuart," who was Hogarth's successor as Serjeant-painter, and by whose works there is no doubt his classic taste was strengthened. He indeed tells us himself that Stuart "joined to the depth of his acquaintance in matters of antiquity, the literature of antiquity;" and that "the pictures, and everything of his designing, are distinguished by that unaffected air of the ancients which alone constitutes true taste." In the latter end of the year 1765, Burke and his brother provided Barry with the means of visiting Rome. Here his careful and frugal habits enabled him to subsist and study for the greatest part of five years; his rugged independence and hatred of the virtuosi and their jobs, having shut him out from the many ways of increasing a small income, which fall to the share of artists residing in that capital.

On his way out he stayed some months at Paris, occupied in sketching and studying the works there. It is curious, as showing the facilities of travel in our day, to note his letter to his patron, describing his journey, the time it took less than a century ago to reach that city from the coast. "The vehicle I came in," says he, "which they call a diligens, has been indeed very diligent, though not altogether expeditious, as we were in motion from four in the morning till eight or nine at night, and yet were from Monday the 29th, till the Sunday night following, upon our journey." In Paris he was captivated with a picture by Le Soeur, which he saw in the Orleans collection then at the Palais Royal. It illustrates the feeling for classic art

and classic subjects biassing his judgment. "The first, (and incomparably the first picture I ever saw in my life)," he writes, "is by Le Soeur. Alexander drinking the potion, and looking on his physician whilst he is reading the letter. Here is everything in a picture; the style of the figures is to the last degree great, noble, and unaffected—the story told in the most interesting manner. . . . . The colouring, and everything that regards the execution, is exceedingly sweet and perfect." He afterwards says:—"I came over here with the most profound veneration for everything of Raphael's; his Madonnas and Holy Families at the Palais Royal and at the Luxembourg are very far from confirming it." Of the picture by Le Soeur he made a copy during his stay for his friend, and in the spring started for the land he had so longed to see. Arrived in Rome, his chief study seems to have been directed to the antique statues and marbles, and the great frescoes of Michael Angelo; though from many passages in his letters it is clear that Titian stood very high in his estimation—higher, it would appear, than the two great Florentines. Thus in one of his letters from Venice, he afterwards writes:—"I have said formerly, that I find Titian is the only modern who fills up an idea of perfection in any one part of the art. There is no example of any thing that goes beyond his colouring, whereas the parts of the art in which Michael Angelo and Raphael excelled, are almost annihilated by the superiority of the antiques." While at Rome he began his picture of "Adam and Eve," now the property of the Society of Arts and exhibited at South Kensington, and did not seem to fear to compare

it with that by Raphael. In his letter to Burke he says:—"I have begun a picture, which I intend for the Exhibition; the subject is 'Eve tempting Adam;' it is also painted in the lodge (loggia) of Raphael, but does not please me, as I think it designed in a manner that neither explains the story nor interests the spectator;" so independent and self-reliant, even in the presence of such mighty artists, was this young and somewhat inexperienced painter.

While Barry was in Italy, the Royal Academy was founded, and we find one or two allusions to it in his letters, not, however, in the way of approval; the gathering together of the small fry of art, which its exhibitions sheltered, was peculiarly distasteful to him. Speaking of his return, he says, "I go over with poor hopes, and I think a melancholy prospect enough, yet this arises rather from my fears about the taste of the public, than from the knowledge I have of myself. I shall say nothing about the catalogues of fish, fowls, fruits, roses, snuffers of the moon, &c., which have been produced in your exhibitions. I have seen them all lately, and I begin now to think that I have taken the wrong end in my studies, and that the antiques and old Italians are more sought after from their characters, which are upon record, than from any real feeling of their excellence." On his way back to England he lingered in some of the great North Italian cities, studying Correggio at Parma, and in the city of its birth the Bolognese school which he commended; while here his funds ran out, and he was beset with difficulties, partly arising from missing a small letter of credit, but showing the low state of his finances. As he approached home his

spirits seem to have sunk at his prospects. The battle of life must now be fought; he could no longer depend upon the kind aid of his patron, but it would be necessary to be self-reliant. Writing from Turin of the works in the gallery there, he says, "The rest of the pictures are Flemish and Dutch, Rubens', Vandyke's, Teniers', Rembrandt's, Scalken's, &c. These are without the pale of my church, and though I will not condemn them, yet I must hold no intercourse with them. God help you, Barry, said I, where is the use of your hair-breadth niceties, your antiques, and your et ceteras? Behold the hand-writing upon the wall is against you; in the country to which you are going, pictures of onion-peels, oysters, and tricks of colour, and other baubles, are in as much request as they are here."

He returned to London in 1771, and in the same year exhibited his "Adam and Eve," which as we have seen he painted during his stay in Italy. To our eyes, as possibly to those of his contemporaries, the picture (though unpretending and agreeable in tone) evinces no feeling for colour, and even the forms are inelegant, unduly round, and without interior markings, their pose somewhat stiff, and the action not easy. He hints even, that he was aware the Burkes were not quite satisfied with his work. But undismayed by imperfect success, he resumed his labour, choosing a subject which required the highest feeling for form and colour, and entering on a rivalry with the greatest masters. This picture, "Venus Rising from the Sea," was exhibited in 1772, and resulted in his election as an associate of the Royal Academy in the autumn of that year, and as an R. A. in 1773.

To us this work is unknown, but we can hardly think

it deserved the commendations bestowed upon it by the author of "Some Account of the Life and Writings" of the painter, who says that "to paint beauty under the character of Venus, was the first dawn of his career in England. How far he succeeded must be left to the different tastes of connoisseurs; but if the 'Galatea' of Raphael was considered a specimen of ideal beauty in that day, or the 'Venus' of Titian, some years after, or the 'Venus de' Medicis,' always as rivalling both; the production of Barry stands on a level, perhaps, with the latter, as it excels, in all the power of exquisite and poetic conception, the two former. It was certainly sufficient to obtain for him probably all he wanted—an acknowledgment from the public of his powers in delineating *Grace* and *Beauty*, in the highest ideal form." However this may be, Barry had now reached a distinguished place in art, and the right to come before the public educated and uneducated, to receive or to influence its judgment; but while in Rome his headstrong, violent, and obstinate temper had made him many enemies. Within three years of his return he endeavoured to quarrel with his long-tried friend Burke, on a mere point of ceremony, and now, "descending from works worthy of the Greeks," says his biographer, "he painted a picture of the death of General Wolfe, and filled his battle-field with nude figures, as though it were an incident in classic story, and of course succeeded less in creating an impression than by his efforts to depict the parents of our race, or the abstract form of ideal beauty." His was a temper that never yielded; adverse criticism only produced in him a state of obstinate opposition; nevertheless, we from a distance

cannot but admire the man who, in pursuit of what he considered the true end of art, devoted himself to a life of lonely poverty, that he might work out this great aim.

He was foremost among those who at this time offered to decorate the interior of St. Paul's, and chose for his share, to paint on its walls the awful subject of "The Jews rejecting Christ when Pilate entreats his Release;" but the age was not ripe for such views, and he turned to other subjects to win fame if possible, and to advance his beloved art. In 1774, on the failure of this proposal to decorate St. Paul's, the Society of Arts, through Mr. Valentine Green the engraver, offered their room for decoration, but this was negatived by the artists themselves. Barry, however, entered warmly into the scheme, and in 1777, after some previous negotiation with the newly-founded society, agreed to paint on the walls of their meeting-room in the Adelphi, a series of works illustrating human culture. All he asked was, that the society should provide him with materials and models; and this being arranged to his satisfaction, he commenced his gratuitous labours, and for seven long years perseveringly occupied himself with the execution of these works, which are at least his best monument. Some have said that he literally starved during the time he was so occupied. He tells us himself, that at the time of undertaking them he had only sixteen shillings in his pocket, and that in the prosecution of his labour, he had often, after painting all day, to sketch or engrave at night some design for the booksellers, which was to supply him with the means of his frugal subsistence; but the society allowed him a small sum, and there is good evidence that his economy, and his long acquaintance

with simple and hard fare, kept him above actual want. What supported his enduring energy during these long years, and supplied him with the vigour for so great a labour? Did he not brood over his future fame, hoping for the applause of posterity as a compensation for his present want of fortune, while he added hero after hero to his canvas and found a corner for himself in the Olympia of his own creation?

At this time, just as he was commencing his great work, Mr. Shee, who arrived in London in 1778, brought with him an introduction to Barry. After describing the dirty, disordered state of Barry's room, he thus paints the artist himself:—"Conceive a little ordinary man, not in the most graceful dishabille, a dirty shirt, without any cravat, his neck open, and a tolerable length of beard, his stockings, not of the purest white in the world, hanging about his heels, sitting at a small table in the midst of this chaos of artificial confusion, etching a plate from one of his own designs. The whole, I think, would furnish a scene worthy of the pencil of a Hogarth."—(*Shee's Life*, i. 84).

Barry's work in the Adelphi claims especial notice in the history of art. Alas! for the critic—in the face of an aim so truly noble, of a sacrifice so truly great, criticism might well be silent, but such silence would not do justice to our subject, nor would Barry himself be satisfied were he alive, that his works received less than they deserved of praise or blame. His pictures propose to illustrate the great truth, "that the attainment of happiness, individual as well as public, depends on the development, proper cultivation, and perfection of the human faculties, physical and moral;" and in their story,

treatment, and accessories are appropriate to the Society whose meeting-room they ornament. They consist of six separate paintings—four, each 15 ft. 2 in. long; two, each occupying the whole length of the chamber, 42 ft. long, and all 11 ft. 10 in. high. From his own account of the works he seems to have intended rather a different series than those now on the walls; but no doubt he was guided in some respects in his future distribution of the subjects by the uses of the hall of assembly in which they are placed.

The first of the series represents the story of Orpheus reclaiming mankind from a savage state. "This story," says Barry, "has been often painted in another way, and from attending more to the letter of allegorical and poetical metaphors than to the spirit of them, hitherto I think very ineffectually; as, however it might do in words, a man encircled with beasts, tygers, and birds, &c., playing with his ten fingers upon an instrument of four or seven strings, is a subject little susceptible of either expression or improvement." As it is carried out it shows us man in a state of nature. A group around Orpheus, who by music and song is elevating their minds above the common animal wants, while they listen to his recital of his poems to the lyre. The scene is laid in the mountainous country of Thrace. This, probably the first executed, is the weakest. With good expression both of face and figure, the action of the Orpheus is constrained, the group before him huddled and confused; but the landscape and the incidents in which it abounds are good accessories to the subject.

The second picture is a Grecian harvest-home or thanksgiving to Ceres and Bacchus: A classic group of

young men and girls are dancing in the foreground; the landscape rich with the colour of the season and filled with incidents showing the abundance of the earth under due cultivation, and the improved condition of the people resulting from agriculture: in the distance are seen rural sports, a wedding procession, and all that is associated with a happy rural life. The dancing figures, however, are poised and not moving, wanting to be thrown out of balance forward to give the spectator the impression of motion.

The third picture, and first of the two large ones, of the series, represents "The Victors of Olympia." It is grandly conceived and executed in a large and simple manner, and there being little of positive colour, it inclines to a composition of tone, and an arrangement of greys and browns. This is on the whole satisfactory and suits well with the subject, giving it a grave and heroic character, yet somewhat at the expense of its appeal to the eye, and rather indicating a sense of timidity in the painter as a colourist. The light and shade are well considered, giving due prominence to the principal figures, and, as in the other pictures, the background and incidents are strictly appropriate. In the principal group, the victors are presenting themselves before the judges and the scribe who is reading their deeds. First the victor in the foot-race, bearing in his hand the palm of previous contests; next, he who ran armed with helmet, spear, and shield, and then an impressive group of two young athletæ carrying on their shoulders their aged parent, accompanied by his grandson. A horse-racer follows reining in his high-bred steed, full of action and life: backing upon the very

extreme of the picture; and filling the left of the composition, is a charioteer driving four steeds abreast, furious with the touch of the curb, attended by a group of children singing one of the Odes of Pindar, who himself accompanies them playing on the lyre. The heroic dignity of man, the training the body to endurance and the limbs to action, the subjugation of strength to will, are the painter's theme, such form the prominent incidents of the group; the philosophers and poets fill up the spaces as subordinate actors, and no less than thirty-five principal figures occupy the canvas, while in the left-hand corner Barry's own likeness finds an appropriate place.

The forms in this picture are particularly amenable to the remarks already made upon Barry as a draughtsman; in them he has adopted proportions which fail to give grandeur, and a manner which does not approach to style. The "terrible way" of Michael Angelo, the classic air of Mantegna, the developed and rounded proportions of Rubens, produce a style felt even in the diluted efforts of their imitators. The sculptors of antiquity, upon whom Barry wished to found himself, were so studious of characteristic form as to have thoroughly appreciated that which should be given to every class of embodied being, in so much that on contemplating a portion, such as a torso or a limb, we are able to decide whether the figure represented a god-like Apollo, or the voluptuous beauty of an Antinous: a mere fragment of the finest period of Greek art would enable us to distinguish the heroic from the god-like form, the trained athlete, such as the gladiator or the discobolus, from the youthful follower of Bacchus or Venus. But Barry's figures, intended to represent the

heroes of the foot-race, the wrestlers and boxers, who had long had the body in training "to bring it into subjection," striving for the mastery, that they might obtain the much prized crown, look big and boneless, mere sacks of flesh. As boxers they might conquer by weight, by brute force, but not by trained skill. The prize-fighter, whether in classic Greece or modern Britain, devotes himself to much maceration of the body, to many and long-continued efforts to fit him for the combat ere he enters the ring to contest for victory, and such training modifies the contours and hardens the muscles of the body and limbs, as vice and crime harden the features of the vicious or profligate. Moreover, here, as in the subjects exalting music and the dance, the poise of the figures is not understood; witness him who, victor once more in the foot-race, is being crowned by the assembled judges; he looks reeling backwards as if from wine. The same error is apparent in the well-imagined group of the two victorious sons bearing forward their aged father to be present when they receive the reward of their victory. The effect of forward movement requires the body to be thrown out of the balance forward, and this would be still more necessary with the weight of their parent on the shoulders, that weight being behind the centre line of the figures if merely standing: the bodies even in rest would require a little advance forward of the upper part to counterbalance the weight: the figure on their right has the same fault; even the horse is prancing without movement. Yet, with all these criticisms, Barry's work is beyond any work of his contemporaries, and a monument to be spoken of with great respect.

It is curious that the subject of mental culture ends here; the next picture gives rather the triumph of navigation than its culture. We may wonder that the painter passed over moral and religious culture altogether, or only enforced them in his concluding work by the delineation of a *Hereafter*. The art of writing if not of printing might well have superseded the representation of the work of the Society as given in the fifth picture, seeing that this was to be substantially acted from time to time in the room the pictures adorn; but perhaps the artist bent to the wishes of the founders of the infant Society, who might desire to shew that modern time had its awards of honour and fame for the arts, rather than for physical culture, for useful rather than for heroic deeds.

The following two paintings are of the smaller size. The fourth, "Navigation, or the Triumph of the Thames," is a glorification of navigation and commerce, perhaps indicating their value in bringing together the nations of the earth. A rock with a Babel-like tower is laved by the waters. We are told that it is "a naval pillar, mausoleum, observatory, and lighthouse, all of which are comprehended in the same structure," and that, "by a flight of imagination, no less classically happy than singularly original, the tritons or sea-gods themselves appear to have erected it as a compliment to the first naval power." How this is intimated, however, except in the descriptive letter-press, we are at a loss to perceive. Such allegories are rarely very intelligible; even those from the master-hand of Rubens are calculated to raise a smile, and belong rather to decorative than historic art.

Our great river is typified by an imposing but some-

what heavy male figure borne in a car upon its waters; around the car float the navigators Drake, Raleigh, Cabot, and Cook in full costume, and Dr. Burney introduced to typify music, in coat and wig of the time, all intermingled with Naiads and Nereids sporting with them amid the waves. Strangely incongruous, and not very clear as to intention, it fails to interest us except for its oddity.

The fifth subject depicts "The Distribution of the Society's Rewards." Here Barry leaves allegory, and descends to common life. The composition is full, yet not crowded. The chief figures—nearly thirty of which are principal—are portraits, the drapery modern, the group of distinguished ladies in the centre simple yet pleasing; the male figures on the right, also portraits, are not so well conceived, and appear crowded and constrained. The background is characteristic. Part of the interior of St. Paul's is introduced with Barry's sketch of "The Fall of Lucifer," which he proposed to contribute to the decoration of that edifice.

The sixth is the remaining large work—"Elysium and Tartarus, or the State of Final Retribution." In the centre, separating dark hell on the right, are seated the colossal guards, crowning the precipitous chain-bound gulf, with, on the same grand scale, Justice weighing the vices and virtues of mankind, while, in the gulf itself, mysteriously seen, are War, Cruelty, Ambition, Hypocrisy. On the other hand, Elysium, one bright field, occupies the remainder of the wide-spread canvas, filled with groups of all who were great in learning, art, and science—all who distinguished themselves by their goodness. These groups comprise nearly eighty figures,

chiefly portraits; above them, in full blaze of light, are female figures representing woman's virtues and their influences, and further, indistinctly seen on the left, are cherubim in the act of adoration, with groups of angels, in the blue sky, leading out of the picture.

The fifth and the sixth are contrasted pictures. In the fifth, princes and judges are distributing earthly rewards to all orders of people for all sorts of works; in the last —perhaps, on the whole, the finest of the series—the wise and the good are entering upon their heavenly reward. It is honourable to Barry's liberality that his Paradise contains men of all ages, all countries, and all religions. Homer, Milton, and Shakspeare are side by side on the Olympian height; Raphael and Titian have their easels on its slopes. Popes and cardinals are there, with Bishop Butler among them, whose "Analogy," is said to have made much impression on the mind of the painter. The Elysium is an impressive work, grandly conceived, and certainly has this great merit, that it differs essentially from the treatment the subject of final retribution has received at the hands of others. We have pointed out the defects and shortcomings of this painted epic in no spirit of depreciation; no other work of the English school, even down to our own day, aspires to so high a rank in a region of Art, in which even to be short of perfection is not to be disgraced.

Barry finished this great work in 1784, and it represents almost in itself the labour of his life in Art. The Society, according to agreement, gave him the proceeds of the Exhibition of his pictures, and added a gift of 200*l*. He etched the series on a large scale, and the sale of these etchings was henceforth the principal source of his

income. It were well, if possible, to pass over the dissensions with his brother artists, arising from his irritable and pugnacious disposition, which separated him from those who wished to be his friends, and embittered his own life. Among his other troubles, some thief broke into his comfortless lodgings and stole 400*l.*, which, amid all his poverty, his saving habits had enabled him to accumulate; the next morning he is said to have placarded his doors with a notice that the burglary was committed by the thirty-nine academicians.

He accused them elsewhere of spending on themselves the monies which should have been laid out for the benefit of Art, and even proposed that the votes of the members, on every occasion of importance, should be taken upon oath. He violated, in his lectures, the established rule, that no allusion should be made to the works of contemporaries, and taunted Reynolds with "the poor mistaken stuff of his discourses." But want of sympathy and success had soured a disposition never very amiable, and while it were to be wished that in the best interests of Art such petty insults had been overlooked, it was hard to hear their constant repetition. He was first removed from his professorship of painting—to which he had been elected in 1772—and, finally, in 1799, by a vote of the general assembly, approved by the King, dismissed from his membership.

We know that Barry was of an irritable and ungovernable temper—his own great enemy in life—but we should hesitate to accept to the letter the account given of him by B. R. Haydon, who said, "Miss Cockings, the housekeeper at the Society of Arts, told him that she remembered Barry, that his violence was dread-

ful, his oaths horrid, and his temper like insanity. His hatred of obligation also was so great that he would accept nothing. Wherever he dined he left one shilling and twopence on the plate, and gentlemen indulged him. The servants were afraid to go near him. He came to work at five o'clock and worked till dark, when a lamp was lighted and he went on etching till eleven at night. When coaxed to talk, his conversation was sublime. She thought the want of early discipline was the cause of his defects."

What influence has his great work at the Adelphi had on the British school? Perhaps rather of warning than of stimulus. Barry's career was run side by side with West; both were born, at least, with the instincts of genius—one gifted with worldly virtues, the other vehement, intractable, and perverse; both aimed at the highest art, but were before their time, and, not appreciated by the public. The courtly and suave manner of the one gained him a princely patron in George III., prosperity smiled upon him during a long life, and present fame at least was his; the other passed his best days in unrequited labour, and died without his fame. From his unceiled room, which had been a carpenter's shop, not even impervious to the weather, uncleaned, unfurnished, with scarcely a bed, he had been, in the early spring of 1806, to the house where he usually dined; when about to return, he was seized with a pleuritic fever; after some cordial had been administered to him, he was taken in a coach to the door of his lonely home. Alas! he either had neighbouring enemies, or some mischievous boys had stuffed the key-hole with dirt and stones; the door could not be opened, and the poor painter, shivering with cold

and disease, was obliged to resort to the temporary shelter which a companion found for him, and then left him sick and alone. He unfortunately remained two days without medical aid; delirium and severe inflammation ensued, and although he rallied so much as unadvisedly to go forth to seek his friend Bonomi, he lingered but a few days, and died on the 22nd of February, 1806.

His body lay in state in the rooms of the Adelphi, in the presence of his great work, and was buried in St. Paul's. There he rests, side by side with the great ones of his profession. Posterity has reversed the position of West and his competitor, the first is last and the last first; but it was hardly to be expected that the young would be anxious to follow Barry in a line of Art in which neither ability nor perseverance seemed to succeed, or to start in a career for which not even princely patronage could obtain public sympathy, nor innate genius, with life-long devotion, win present fame, hardly indeed a bare subsistence.

The third painter, whose works are the subject of comment in this chapter, is *John Singleton Copley, R.A.* Less lofty in the subjects he chose for illustration than West and Barry, and finding his inspiration in the exalted deeds of his own time rather than in sacred or classic lore, his works naturally appealed to popular enthusiasm. Born 3rd July, 1737, at Boston, then a British colony, of Irish parents, immediately upon their arrival in America, he was led early in life by his own tastes to drawing, and, out of the reach of academies and masters, he was left unobtrusively to make his own way. He commenced with portraits and domestic groups, for

which he found the backgrounds in the wild-wood scenery around him. In 1760, and yearly to 1767, he sent pictures to London for exhibition, where these works attracted notice, and raised expectations of his future career. He was making a good income at Boston by his portraits, but he looked forward with a longing desire to see the great works of Art in the old country, and for this he husbanded his gains. In 1774 he was enabled to start for Europe with the intention of making a three years' tour. He took London on his way, and from thence went on direct to Rome, but in the following year visited the chief seats of Art in the cities of Italy, Germany, and the Low Countries, and after a short stay in Paris, returned to London at the end of the year 1775, and decided to settle here.

In 1776 he exhibited at the Royal Academy a work called, in the phraseology of that day, "A Conversation," that is, a group of portraits, either small or of life-size, engaged or grouped in some simple manner; and in the same year was elected an associate of the newly-formed body. Shortly after Copley had exhibited his first work in the Royal Academy, an event occurred of great national importance, which must also, from the circumstances of his birth and parentage, have had a peculiar interest for the painter. In the spring of the year 1778, William Pitt, the celebrated Earl of Chatham, who had ever opposed the taxation of our American possessions, and held the opinion "that this kingdom has no right to levy a tax upon her colonies," came down to the House of Lords, while still suffering from a severe attack of the gout, to take part in a discussion on American affairs. He had already spoken at some length, but got up again

to reply to some observations of the Duke of Richmond, when he suddenly fell fainting and insensible into the arms of the surrounding peers. This was on the 7th of April. He was removed at once to his house at Hayes in Kent, where he lingered for a short time, and died on the 11th of the succeeding month. This incident furnished a noble subject for the painter, and one for which Copley was peculiarly well qualified. He commenced the large picture of "The Death of the Earl of Chatham," now in our National Gallery, painting distinct portraits of the various peers holding office, or otherwise present on that occasion. It may be objected that the great Earl did not die in the House, but only received his death-stroke there. The scene, however, was so striking, the voice of the great orator so prophetic, and the wisdom of his views, receiving the solemn sanction, as it were the affirmation, of one then dying, that a very little licence connects the death-stroke with the death itself.

There are few tasks more difficult to the painter than the one Copley had now undertaken, that of arranging an historical subject with a stirring central action, the figures in which are all to be individual portraits. The painter has to keep the attention on the principal group, to direct the individual action and expression towards that point, and yet so to place each figure that the face may be treated as a portrait. He has to get great variety of pose, and yet must not turn any of the principal figures so far from the spectator that the faces are hidden. Then again the expression which the artist requires on his faces, can hardly be given without detracting from the likeness, or must be sought from sitters,

less interested in that part of the painter's labours than in their own personal presentment. The painter's feeling, and the working of his imagination, are fixed on the central incident, but his intent is damped and deadened, not only by the whims and wishes of his sitters, intent only upon their individual portraiture, but by his own labour on the mere likeness, a quality quite separate from the treatment of the main incident. A remark may be made which will aptly illustrate this. Here is a sudden and awful catastrophe—all eyes are turned towards the dying Earl—it is true that consistently with the dignity of the august assembly, the action of alarm is subdued and solemn, still it would be highly natural that some would call for help—some eagerly suggest the most instant remedies—cry for medical assistance, or urge the loosening of the cumbrous garments. Even lords and dukes in such matters follow the impulse of nature, but if we look from face to face, some sharpened by pity, some moved with surprise or terror, none are in the act of speaking, all are seen with closed lips as in an assembly of the dumb. Seeking for likeness, the painter was too happy to obtain it, especially if he had been successful in adding the requisite expression of pity or sorrow. He would not risk the loss of both to give the action of speaking also; nor would he suffer his attention to be distracted from the whole to enable him to achieve a less important quality in the individual.

Some anomalies have been pointed out in the picture, such as introducing the Earl's sons, and other members not peers on the floor of the House; and dressing the peers in their robes, which, on ordinary occasions, are never worn; but Copley may well be forgiven, indeed he

was wise in enriching his picture with the feelings of kinship as well as with the deep public sympathy of colleagues. Altogether the work is a fine composition: the principal incident and group well supported by the secondary ones; the difficulties above alluded to on the whole successfully surmounted, and the story solemnly and touchingly told; while as a group of portraits of the great men of that age, it will grow in interest with the natives of our own land, as well as of that for which the great orator laboured with his last breath.

It has been said that the painter, on his first arrival in England, took the house, No. 25, George Street, Hanover Square, in which he resided until his death, and in which his distinguished son resided during a long life and also died. But from the original proposals, issued in March, 1780, for publishing a print from "The Death of Chatham," we find it stated that, "subscriptions are received by Mr. Copley, at his house No. 12, in Leicester Fields," so that it must have been somewhat later that he removed to George Street. From these proposals it would also appear that originally it was intended that Mr. Sherwin should engrave the picture, but it was afterwards confided to Bartolozzi, who made some beautiful drawings from the principal heads, and produced a work so highly popular, that we are told 2,500 copies were sold in the course of a few weeks.

In 1779, Copley was elected a full member of the Royal Academy, with a widely extended reputation, arising from the success of the work we have just described, a work which, by the interest it had created, made him known, as well to the wisest and greatest of the land, as to the general public. He had now the

difficult task of supporting the reputation he had gained. He was equally fortunate in the subject he chose for his next important picture. "A body of French troops having invaded the island of Jersey in the year 1781, possessed themselves of the town of St. Helier's, and taken the Lieutenant-Governor prisoner, obliged him, in that situation, to sign a capitulation to surrender the island. Major Pierson, a gallant young officer, under the age of twenty-four years, sensible of the invalidity of the capitulation made by the Lieutenant-Governor whilst he was a prisoner, with great valour and prudence attacked and totally defeated the French troops, and thereby rescued the island, and gloriously maintained the honour of the British army. Unfortunately this brave officer fell in the moment of victory; not by a chance shot, but by a ball levelled at him, with a design, by his death, to check the ardour of the British troops. The major's death was instantly retaliated by his black servant on the man that shot the major."

Such is the incident, as described by the painter himself, which was to form the subject of his work. It was undertaken while the national sympathy was yet alive to the loss of the young hero, and the praise of his valour still loud on all tongues. It was a subject of the class Copley had already made his own, in which the incident could be truthfully treated, and the very portraits of the actors introduced. The painter himself went most probably to Jersey to examine the scene of the action; and there are still existing careful drawings of the locality, made on the spot; moreover, he tells us that "the background is an exact view of that part of the town of St. Helier's where the battle was fought; and at a

distance a hill is seen over the houses, on which some companies posted themselves and kept up a brisk fire upon the enemy." There are also introduced in the central group the portraits of twelve persons, officers of the 95th Regiment and others, including the faithful black who avenged his master's death.

From this historical incident he produced a very fine picture. In the centre, a group of officers have hastily raised the dying major to bear him from the field, and the black servant, a prominent figure in the group, has marked down his man. On the right of the picture a body of soldiers are led on to charge the staggering enemy; on the left, a group of the frightened townspeople are flying from the terrors of the fight. There is but little of conventionality, and great sense of truth and naturalness, in the way in which the painter has treated the incident. It appears as if the event must have happened as it is represented. Indeed, an authority on battles, the great Duke himself, when seated before it at dinner, is said on more than one occasion to have expressed his admiration of the picture, and that it was the best representation of a battle he had ever seen. It is worthy of notice how well the painter has treated the principal figure. At first sight it appears strange that the head of the sufferer is so much lower than the legs, but any one who has raised an inanimate body from the ground will be aware of the greater weight of the head and chest. In the hurry of lifting the major to bear him out of the strife, the result would be as represented, and it would take some adjustment of the help and the weight to place him on a level, with the shoulders properly raised. As it is, the incident is

most true, and yet greatly aids the composition by giving the fullest indication of the hurry of the strife, and by breaking the too uniformly straight line that would have resulted if the body of the dying man had been perfectly horizontal.

The colour of the picture is agreeable, fresh, and pure —the handling very vigorous; and it remains to this day one of the first pictures of its class in the English school; less talked of, perhaps, because less known than West's "Death of Wolfe," but a work of far higher merit. It was painted for Alderman Boydell, but after his death repurchased by the artist, and has ever since been in the hands of the family; for this reason perhaps it has escaped the dreadful veil of brown varnish which has obscured so many pictures of the British school. It was engraved by Bartolozzi as a companion to the "Death of Chatham." We are gratified to add that since the death of Copley's distinguished son, Baron Lyndhurst, this picture has been purchased by the nation, and occupies its just place in our National Gallery.

Copley next proceeded to carry out a work of which the composition and design had been prepared for some years: "Charles I. demanding, in the House of Commons, the Five Impeached Members." The picture when completed was exhibited in Spring Gardens, and the subject again combined the interest of individual portraiture with an historical incident; fifty-eight of the celebrated personages of the Revolution being included in the composition, and great pains taken to obtain the best authorities for their representation. The painter seems to have been thoroughly alive to the difficulty, to which we have already alluded, of treating portraiture

with the expression required in the spectators of an historical event. He tells us that, after obtaining the best authorities, he had "without scruple added the expression which his subject required." A mere collection of portraits, however interesting the characters, would constitute, he says, "but an insipid production; and though such genuine resemblances will be thought embellishments to an historical work, they are still to be considered subordinate to the main objects, and must never be suffered to detract from the just spirit of the picture."

The city of London now gave him a commission to paint for their Guildhall a large picture of "The Repulse and Defeat of the Spanish Floating Batteries at Gibraltar by Lord Heathfield," and he thus describes the treatment of his subject—"Lord Heathfield on horseback in conversation with Generals Boyd, Delamotte, and Green, pointing to Sir Roger Curtis and a detachment of British seamen, who, at the hazard of their lives, are rescuing their vanquished enemies from destruction." It is said that the painter went to Gibraltar to prepare sketches of various officers of the garrison, and to study the locality for this work, which is quite in keeping with his known desire to treat his incidents in strict accordance with the locality. Among the studies remaining in the house of his son, were three heads—Lord Heathfield, General Sir Robert Boyd, and Major-General Delamotte, boldly and vigorously painted in oil of the size of life, and no doubt prepared on this occasion. Also many of the drawings of groups for the picture, which serve to illustrate his readiness as a draftsman, and the manner in which he

conducted his work. The groups were carefully arranged, and spiritedly drawn from Nature, on a small scale in black and white chalk on grey paper. These drawings were evidently enlarged by squaring on to the canvas, and the work painted at once. The picture itself is finely composed, and painted in the same simple and vigorous manner as Copley's other works—a manner which, if it precludes the refinements of colour, stands well because the work was done at once. It has the same freshness of colour and look of out-of-doors daylight which is characteristic of his art. It is boldly conceived, uniting an action on the sea with one on shore, the difficulty of the two planes being well overcome by placing the military on the raised platform of the fort. The sailors are thus sufficiently removed into the distance, although close to the bottom line of the picture, and the figures in the naval action reduced to about half life-size. The portraits of the fifteen principal personages are introduced.

No doubt naval critics may find fault with the accessories, but to the artist or the general spectator the bustle and animation of the scene is well given. The group of military officers is finely managed; Lord Heathcote himself towers above the rest on his white horse, and the long line of black cocked hats tells against the light sky, the scarlet coats of the soldiers being balanced in the other half of the picture by the red flames of the burning ship. There is a great variety in the action and position of the various heads and faces, and the line against the sky is very agreeable, and calls the attention at once to the principal group of actors. The picture was apparently painted for the space

in the principal court of the Guildhall, where it now hangs, and which it fills completely. Curiously lighted by a small window on each side near the top, parts of the picture are seen with difficulty unless the day is bright; yet it is evidently quite sound, and standing well without vehicle cracks; but it is very dirty, and needs varnishing, which ought to be done now, when no restorer is likely to fall into the old fault of toning down to the brown state. Art pictorial owes little to the Corporation, if we judge by the state of their pictures in the hall at this present time, when the filthy accumulations of three-quarters of a century remain untouched, and are aided in their bad effects by the acrid deposits from a smoky atmosphere and the bad exhalations of a crowded court. The picture, when completed, was exhibited in St. James's Park, and was so popular that it is said to have been visited by 60,000 people, and that the net profits arising from the exhibition of that work and the "Death of Chatham," amounted together to 5,000*l*.

Other works followed of a nature analogous to those we have described: "King Charles signing Strafford's Death-warrant," "The Assassination of Buckingham," "The Battle of the Boyne," "The House of Commons visiting the Army at Hounslow," and many others. Copley continued in the practice of his profession, painting both portraits and historical pictures until his death at the advanced age of seventy-eight, on the 9th December, 1815. He was very fortunate in the line of Art he adopted; he appealed to national taste in his subjects, and to the national love of portraiture in his mode of illustrating them. When he turned to sacred themes, of which he left behind him a few small pictures,

he was far less successful, because less original. We can trace the adoption of figures and attitudes from the greater masters who had occupied that field, and feel how wise he was to continue in the walk he had chosen for himself. His name has been less in men's mouths than the name of Barry or West, not because he was less an honour to our school, or of less reputation in his own day, but because they were more happy in having their pictures in public places where they could be seen and appreciated; the want of a gallery for British Art not having been recognized till the generation that knew him had long passed away.

Many have since his day undertaken groups of portraiture connected with some historical event; but few have treated such subjects so satisfactorily as John Singleton Copley. His manner, we are told by several authorities, was laboriously slow, though we should not have judged so from his works. Mr. Serjeant, an American painter, says:—"He painted a very beautiful head of my mother, who told me that she sat to him fifteen or sixteen times, six hours at a time; and that once she had been sitting to him for many hours, when he left the room for a few minutes, but requested she would not move from her seat during his absence. She had the curiosity, however, to peep at the picture, and to her astonishment she found it all rubbed out." And Leslie, R.A., writing to Mr. Dunlop, the American author, says:—"Of Copley I can tell you very little. I saw him once at Mr. West's gallery, but he died very soon after my arrival in London. Mr. West told me that he was the most tedious of all painters. When painting a portrait he used to match with his palette-knife a tint for every

part of the face, whether in light, shadow, or reflection. This occupied himself and the sitter a long time before he touched the canvas. One of the most beautiful of his portrait-compositions is at Windsor Castle, and represents a group of the royal children playing in a garden with dogs and parrots. It was painted at Windsor, and during the operation, the children, the dogs, and the parrots became equally wearied. The persons who were obliged to attend them while sitting, complained to the Queen; the Queen complained to the King; and the King to Mr. West, who had obtained the commission for Copley. Mr. West satisfied his Majesty that Mr. Copley must be allowed to proceed in his own way, and that any attempt to hurry him might be injurious to the picture, which would be a very fine one when done." The tedious preparatory practice for this picture (which is now at Buckingham Palace) is, however, not inconsistent with rapid execution when the work is actually commenced.

CHAPTER IX.

GEORGE ROMNEY AND JOSEPH WRIGHT (OF DERBY).

Portrait Painting by the History Painters—The School which succeeded Reynolds—*George Romney*—His Introduction to Art—Abandons his Family, and comes to London—His Success as a Painter, and Journey to Rome—Returns and settles in London—Finds full Employment—His Longings after High Art—And Attempts at History—Want of Perseverance—Due partly to defective Education—Takes his Stand outside the Royal Academy—Observations on this—His own Reasons for his Isolation—He is successful and wealthy, but discontented—Lady Hamilton—Her strange History—Return to his Family and Death—Estimate of his Character and Art—*Joseph Wright*—Pupil of Hudson—Patronized in his Native County—Marries and visits Italy—Paints Effects of Moonlight and of Fire—Tries Portraiture at Bath—His Election into the Royal Academy—And Refusal of the Distinction—His Works—And Valetudinarian Character.

While Barry, West, and Copley were devoting themselves to historic Art, there were other English painters, their contemporaries, who endeavoured to uphold and continue the fame of English portraiture, even during the lifetime of Reynolds and Gainsborough. Of these George Romney and Joseph Wright, known as Wright of Derby, demand our notice; but while making them the joint subjects of this chapter, they have no other connexion either in their art or their lives, than may be assigned to them as contemporaries holding rank in the same profession, of whose art it is convenient to treat together.

It has already been remarked that Copley's historic

Art partook largely of portraiture, and that as a portrait painter he was on the whole successful. West also, when called upon by his Royal Patron, condescended to lay aside for a time the practice of historic Art, and to paint the portraits of the Royal Family. Indeed it may be said of the works of both these painters, that had they immediately succeeded the degenerate followers of Kneller, their portraits, highly respectable as they are, would have been considered a real advance in Art. But compared with Reynolds and Gainsborough, their works are little more than merely satisfactory, and have none of the genius shown even in the slightest works of the two great masters of our school. It has been objected to Reynolds that he spent much of his life and wasted his fine powers in experiments on colouring. The same cannot be said of either Copley or West; one method seems to characterize all their works, which evince great readiness, and in Copley's case great apparent power of painting at once, great decision of handling; but both had little feeling as *painters*. Perhaps it would be difficult to point to a picture more smartly and boldly painted than that by Copley of the princesses, daughters of George III., already alluded to (p. 230); but in saying this all is said, since every part is painted with the same handling and by the same method.

There is no doubt that much of the *common* appearance of the works of both Copley and West resulted from the executive; even in the disrupted and cracked surface of Reynolds there is ever a noble quality seen beneath, and the very texture of decay is less offensive in him than the uniform hard surface and dry juiceless cracks in their pictures—for even their works have cracked—but without

that luscious richness as of an over-ripe fruit, which characterizes the work of Reynolds. The portraits of West at least look sour, hard, and unripe beside it, yet is there even in him, but far more in Copley, qualities (though not those which are especially painter-like qualities) that would have placed them in the first rank of English portraiture, had not such great ones as Reynolds and Gainsborough gone before.

West, Copley, Cotes, R.A., and N. Dance, R.A. (B. 1734, D. 1811), and, in his early portraits, Wright of Derby, painted solidly and at once, and cared very little if at all for the ground; and in this they followed the executive methods of the old school. Thus if we examine the celebrated series of portraits of the Kit-Cat Club, now in the possession of Mr. Baker, of Bayfordbury, we shall find them mechanical, hard, dry, and with little texture, little impasto, and little appearance of glazing; and this not only in the heads which Kneller himself executed, but also in the accessories—the hands and garments the work of the drapery painter. The same may be said of the works of the men above enumerated: great dexterity, but at the same time great sameness of handling, and a dry unvaried surface that gets hair-cracked, and may rise from the ground and scale off, but rarely draws together, and never gives signs of flowing in the darks.

A curious portrait on one of the staircases at Hatfield will illustrate both this indifference to the ground on which they painted, and the solid execution of the period. It is a whole-length of one of the noble house of Cecil, in the flowing wig and costume of the early half of the eighteenth century. Having on some occasion been placed in the hands of a picture-cleaner, the curls of the wig

were wiped away, and a portrait of the Duke of Monmouth in armour began to emerge to the light of day. No doubt the painter had taken a portrait of the disgraced duke, and used the canvas for another sitter without further preparation, solidly painting the head of his new sitter over the old one. By the followers of such a method, the only advance possible is in the direction of rapid and dexterous execution, and this it has been shown that the painters we have been adverting to, achieved. Northcote, Opie, Hoppner, and others of the succeeding race, of whom we shall presently speak, followed, on the contrary, or attempted to follow, the methods of Reynolds. They adopted and used his pigments with all their faults, realizing few of the beauties he achieved with them; they sought to arrive at his impasto, but rather by the loading of successive repetitions than by the proper preparation of a ground on which to place their finishing paintings; and the result was, and is, that their works, like his, have made rapid progress in decay—a decay that is unaccompanied with the richness and beauty that lingers even in the perishing works of Reynolds. Still the method, although ill-appreciated and faultily adopted, was one that permitted progress and encouraged experiments, and the English school, after floundering awhile with perishing materials, falsely used, and methods of painting ill-understood, is at last again making sound advances, and has maintained a reputation as a school of colour, which could never have resulted from the methods of West, Copley, and their predecessors.

We have, in our third chapter, glanced at the merits of Francis Cotes, R.A., who, with Dance, R.A., known

by change of name as Sir Nathaniel Holland, are both at least entitled to respect as portrait painters. But we must speak more at length of *George Romney*. Hayley, his biographer, tells us that Romney was born on the 26th December, 1734, at Dalton-le-Furness, Lancashire, was the son of a man of many occupations, builder, merchant, and farmer, and was apprenticed to a cabinet-maker, with whom he acquired some skill at his trade. Cumberland says that Romney followed this craft for ten years, and latterly added to it some skill in carving, which led him on in an art direction. His first indication of talent for the art in which he became celebrated, was shown in sketching from memory the features of a casual visitor at the parish church of his native village, and he was stimulated to improve himself by a resident friend of the name of Williamson, an eccentric man devoted to chemistry and alchemy. Romney afterwards studied under a Cumberland artist of the name of Steel, to whom he was apprenticed by his father. His master, who seems to have been a rollicking blade, and was known by the cognomen of Count Steel, was but little older than the pupil, and being engaged in a love-affair with a neighbouring lady, employed his apprentice to assist him in carrying on a clandestine correspondence with her, which ended in Steel's eloping with the lady to Scotland, and leaving his pupil behind in a fit of fever and sickness arising from "his exertions in assisting the escape of the bride." Romney was nursed in his sickness by a compassionate young girl, and her attention and his gratitude resulted in a precipitate marriage in 1756, when the painter was barely twenty-two years of age. The painter's son speaks of his mother as of the

same rank in life as his father, and respectably connected; left an orphan when quite a child, her mother had brought up her and her sister respectably, and with credit.

We are told that the example of Romney's first associate, Wilkinson, who had left his wife because she caused the failure of some chemical experiments, in which he was deeply interested, and the aspiring ambition of the painter made him resolve very soon after the ceremony, "as he had no means of breaking his fetters, which he regarded as inimical to improvement and the display of his genius, to hide them as much as possible from his troubled fancy." His master's return, and removal from Kendal to York, afforded a most seasonable means of executing his project. Hayley lays great stress on the "exquisite sensibility of his friend," and his "exquisite tenderness of heart;" but the act he records is wholly inconsistent with these expressions, and the after-conduct of Romney towards his wife and children seems to evidence tenderness for himself, his own ease and advancement, but little for those whom it was his first duty to love and protect. It is true that when Steel cancelled his indentures and left Romney free, he returned to Kendal for awhile to find a son born to him, a daughter afterwards arising from the renewed intercourse. Yet he resolved, instead of settling, "to wander forth alone in quest of professional adventures." Rambling over the north, painting heads life-size at two guineas, and small whole-lengths for six guineas, he contrived to save nearly 100*l.*, when taking 30*l.* of this sum for his own expenses, he gave the rest to his dutiful and unoffending wife, now burdened with two children, and left the north and his family to seek his fortune in the great metropolis.

He arrived in London in the year 1762, and his first success was attained in historical painting. For a picture of the "Death of General Wolfe," he obtained from the infant Society of Arts a donation of 25*l.*, Mr. Pine and Mr. Mortimer having carried off the two prizes offered, and the committee giving the extra sum in acknowledgment of the talents displayed in his work. The prize given to Mr. Mortimer had first been awarded to Romney, but Sir Joshua observing that the judgment was unjust, it was reversed, and a gratuity given to Romney instead. It would appear from some statements that this rankled in Romney's mind, and his after-conduct affords some ground for thinking so, although his biographer endeavours to disprove it.

Romney left London for the Continent in 1764, for a short visit to Paris, where he carefully examined the works of art in the Louvre, the Orleans collection, and the gallery of the Luxembourg, particularly enjoying the splendid allegories of Rubens in that palace. On his return he removed into Gray's Inn, and was soon engaged in painting the members of the legal profession. In 1765 he exhibited a picture of the death of "King Edward," and now received from the Society of Arts its second prize of fifty guineas. He then removed to Newport Street, Long Acre, and was, we are told by one of his pupils, in the receipt of 1,200*l.* a year from his profession, when he boldly resolved to quit present affluence and reputation, and with a view to improvement, to make a long visit to Italy. In March, 1773, in company with Ozias Humphrey, a brother artist, he took his way to the Continent for the second time; after a short stay at Paris, the two companions proceeded

slowly, making their journey somewhat of a tour of pleasure. During their passage from Genoa to Ostia, they were in great danger from a storm, and, when Romney's companion rallied him on his consternation and gravity, he was assured that "it did not arise from personal fear, but from tender concern at the prospect of being suddenly separated for ever from his friends and relations;" relations whom, in his now affluent condition, he left in separate loneliness in the far north, nor sought to share with them the advantages arising from his gratified ambition. The travellers arrived in Rome on the 18th of June, and here from a singular mental infirmity—a perpetual dread of enemies—Romney avoided all further intercourse with his fellow-traveller, and with all his countrymen then studying in Rome. What was the nature of his labours, it is not possible at this distance of time to determine: he made a few studies, and at least one copy from Raphael, and after some months returned to England, by way of Venice and Parma, (making a stay at both places,) in the beginning of July, 1775; and at Christmas of the same year, finally settled himself in Cavendish Square, in the house where Cotes had lived before him, and which was afterwards occupied by Sir Martin A. Shee.

The time had now arrived when we should expect that Romney would send for his wife and children, who, during the many long years he had been struggling upwards, had been left to lead a life of lonely separation in Lancashire. He was master of his time, in full practice, established in reputation, settled in a noble mansion, where a wife's help might indeed be useful, and her society, with that of his two children, have tended to

drive away the moody demon that seemed to be his continual companion. In 1776, almost immediately after settling in his new abode, his poet-biographer tells us that the fervid imagination and intense spirit of application preyed upon the painter's health, and Hayley then wrote a florid invitation to him to spend some time at Earlham, and was successful in tempting him to pay a visit there; and he adds, that Romney "was induced to spend a few weeks with him every season for twenty years." But during the whole of this time he paid only two visits to his wife and children.

Settled in Cavendish Square, Romney began by charging fifteen guineas for a head life size, and proportionately for half and whole lengths. Before he came to London, and while still painting portraits at two guineas a head, he had devoted some of his time to subject-pictures; thus at Lancaster, before the birth of his daughter, he had already completed pictures from Shakspeare's tragedy of *Lear*, and from *Tristram Shandy*, incited to the latter by having made the acquaintance of Sterne in his master's studio at York, when that author was sitting to Steel for his portrait; moreover, as we have seen, he had twice since achieved success by his subject-pictures. With such time as a constant influx of sitters left at his command, he was now ambitious of higher and nobler attempts and to return to historic art; thus many subject-pictures were commenced. But the painter's invention was more fervid than deep; easily excited, but soon satiated. When a thought seized him, some fortunate pose, the face of some fair sitter, some sweet expression, he was eager to turn it to account, and a passage from Shakspeare or the poets was improvised,

a muse or an abstract virtue personified, and whether the composition was extensive or only a single figure proposed, the painter was impatient to put it on canvas, mostly without any previous preparation or arrangement. Costume was a matter of no consideration, no accessories were studied; what the composition should be when completed was left to time and chance. His excitement and pleasure in commencing pictures seemed to know no bounds, but he wanted that quality of perseverance seemingly so antagonistic to the fire of genius, yet alas! which must of necessity be wedded to it, to form the true painter. Sitters came in and must be attended to; new ideas arose, brighter it seemed to him than those he had laid aside, and so the old ones were neglected and taken up no more, unless by some happy chance the flame of his enthusiasm with regard to them was relighted, when they were again placed on the easel, perhaps once more to be as hastily put by.

Moreover, Romney had never had a proper education in Art, and as a work approached completion, partly from imperfect knowledge, and partly from not having carefully considered it as a whole before commencing, he found his difficulties increase upon him, and no doubt was tempted to lay the canvas aside in hopes of an easier conquest. Hayley, speaking of the causes which prevented a painter, whom he considered so inventive a genius, from rarely completing what he began, says that "he had not thoroughly acquired the mastery in anatomical science, which should enable a great inventive artist to draw the human figure, in all its variations of attitudes, with ease and truth." Had he any anatomical knowledge? We are elsewhere told

that his fellow-artists in Rome knew nothing of his studies; he could have done little in Lancashire and York; and in London, before he departed for Italy, he was constantly employed at portrait painting; thus it is fair to suppose that whatever feeling for true "form" he might have, had been but very imperfectly cultivated. He loved sketching, he loved portrait painting, which required little more thought, as *he* painted, than to follow the leadings of his model. He loved to paint from the fair Emma, as Hayley calls the person raised from being a painter's model to be an ambassador's wife and the intimate of queens and princesses,—to paint the fair Emma as Contemplation or Innocence, or any other abstraction; but he did not love the dry labour of thought, the painful toil of completion when the first fervour of the imagination is jaded; he disliked that mere executive which is the body to the spirit, the necessary clog that holds the painter to the earth when he would desire to soar aloft into the heaven of invention. Hence the number of his portraits and sketches, the number of commencements of pictures—cartloads it is said, were removed from Hampstead after his death—and the incompleteness of even those works which Romney himself deemed finished.

His biographer continually notices commencements of pictures, not sketches, but important subjects, as "commenced at Earlham," "considerably advanced," "never carried out," "left, alas! incomplete," "never touched again," "never received the finishing touches of his hand," and his Life of the painter seems a continuous apology for shortcomings and incompleteness. Nevertheless in portraiture, having adopted a broad and

general manner, and being ready in execution to the extent which he carried his art, his pencil was in continual occupation.

We find that in 1783 his portraits had risen so high in the public estimation that he was regarded as the rival of Reynolds; he had always been a favourite with the legal profession, since his schoolfellow Greene had introduced him at Gray's Inn to paint the portraits of Sir Joseph Yates and many of his legal brethren, and this year Lord Thurlow was among the number of his sitters. Alluding to the rivalry between the two painters, his lordship said, "Reynolds and Romney divide the town, I am of the Romney faction," and from other sources we know that the President's studio was somewhat deserted, the street where he lived no longer crowded with carriages, the tide of fashion having ebbed away to his northern competitor in Cavendish Square; even Northcote allows that "Reynolds was not much employed as a portrait painter after Romney grew into fashion." With increase of sitters our painter from time to time increased his prices, until in 1793, when all rivalry with Reynolds had ceased, Romney's price for a head, life size, had reached thirty-five guineas, and during the latter years of his practice his annual income from portraits alone was nearly four thousand pounds. Robinson, his pupil, who from being in the house knew all Romney's affairs, reckoned that two years later, in 1785, his portraits alone brought him three thousand six hundred and thirty-five pounds, and such was the rapidity with which he worked when at his easel, that taking his daily labour on several portraits, he might be said to complete at least one in a day. The fact is,

that in Hayley, the painter "kept a poet" who praised him in ode and sonnet, and kept him before the world in complimentary verses, ending in 1785 with five poetical "Epistles," when "My Romney" is thus apostrophized.

> "May Art, in honour of a son like thee,
> So justly daring, with a soul so free,
> Each separate province to thy care commend,
> And all her glories in thy pencil blend!
> May tender Titian's mellow softness join
> With mighty Angelo's sublimer line,
> Coreggio's grace with Raphael's taste unite,
> And in thy perfect works enchant the ravished sight."

In this full tide of fame and practice we might have expected that Romney would seek to join the dominant Art body, and to become a member of the Royal Academy. The Incorporated Society of Artists was nearly defunct. The Academy, rising into importance, included most of the eminent artists of the day—was favoured by the Crown—and its Exhibition, now the only one where the artists could openly contend, visited and enjoyed by the public. There is no doubt that Romney's talent would have claimed a ready entrance, and that among the members generally he would have found a welcome; but there were many reasons why he was disinclined to this step. To the original forty members had now been added the body of Associates, and though, in his own opinion, and in the eyes of his immediate friends, equal to the best, he must have gone through the prescribed form, and entered in the junior rank, waiting a longer or shorter time for his translation to the higher honours. Besides, it would appear that at that time some canvassing was expected (a thing positively unknown in the last quarter of a century), and to this he could not stoop.

He well knew also the advantages of standing alone—of one who, while he abstains from seeking entrance into the Academy, and even repudiates the desire to be a member, is yet willing, like some in our own day, to accept the position of being injured by exclusion, and the greater publicity arising from professional isolation.

Hayley, writing of 1785, says that Meyer, the enamel-painter, urged Romney to become a member, "in prospect of hereafter taking the presidency," which, if true, shows that Meyer knew his man; but Hayley took the opposite view, and Romney eventually determined that "the more he reflected on the peculiarities of his own disposition, the more he was convinced that the comfort of his life and the advancement of his Art would be most easily and effectually promoted by setting limits to his passion for popular applause, and confining the display of his works, whether portraits or fancy pictures, to the circle of his own *domestic gallery*." We are told elsewhere that he avoided the company of his brother artists, yet continually complained that they neglected and shunned him; and that professional rivalry with Sir Joshua made him beyond measure jealous, yet fearful to place his works side by side with those of the President on the walls of a public exhibition. They would certainly have shown to disadvantage so contrasted, which Romney avoided by their being only seen in his domestic gallery. Dr. Johnson said of Reynolds, "that he was one of the most invulnerable of men," yet he felt annoyed by this rivalry of fashion rather than of Art, and could speak disparagingly of "the man in Cavendish Square," while

there hardly existed one whose sensitiveness it was more easy to wound than Romney; and he, notwithstanding his success, and the poetic flattery of his friend Hayley, was but too well aware that the world of Art was with Reynolds, if for a time the world of fashion had left the President's door to throng his own. Added to all these considerations, Romney, always a vain man and very ambitious, might have thought that he ought to have been included in the number of the first forty members of the Royal Academy. He was in London at the time, had made one or two successful efforts in historic Art, and was in good practice as a portrait painter. Neglected at the formation of the body, and having made some boast of contemning the honour, it was not easy to secede from his opposition when, if he himself held a higher position in the world of Art, the Academy also had got over the first opposition it had to contend with, and was certainly not inclined to woo him to join.

While in full practice as a portrait painter, and in the intervals of his sitters, giving reins to his imagination in multitudes of sketches for subjects never completed even as sketches, and numberless commencements on canvas that were never carried out, he still occasionally finished what may be called a fancy picture. In 1786, when Alderman Boydell first broached his scheme of a gallery of subjects from Shakspeare's plays, Romney entered into the project with his usual ardour. He immediately commenced a picture of "The Shipwreck" from the *Tempest*, and working at it more perseveringly than was usual with him, finished it early in the spring of 1790.

This picture, as treated by Romney, combines two principal groups, one on the sea, and one on the shore, thus necessarily on planes somewhat separated from each other, and therefore imposing difficulties on a painter accustomed to study his subject deeply, and carefully to arrange all the parts of the composition before commencing on the canvas. But such previous study was inconsistent with the hasty vehemence of Romney, whose practice was to paint at once into a group any figure or action which had pleased him in his slight sketch, or in the model before him, and to trust to the chapter of accidents for the completion of the whole. The picture was a source of constant anxiety to him while in progress, and he thanked God for its completion, when announcing to Hayley that he had finished it; yet, as appears, not quite to his own or to the poet's satisfaction. The latter says that owing to Romney's "imperfect and fortuitous education, he was ill fitted to produce a work of congruity and truth;" and speaking of this very picture, remarks:—"There is great force and magnificence, but not equal clearness of conception in the design, for the hurly-burly in the ship, and the cell of the princely enchanter, are unfortunately huddled together. This appeared to me a radical error in the original sketch, which the artist tried many expedients to counteract, but which, in my opinion, he was never able completely to remedy."

When this work was completed, his great rival Reynolds had ceased to paint, and Romney was left supreme in portraiture. But the demon of melancholy that had haunted him in his lonely home from the very days of his youth upward, was not to be driven forth by

prosperity or by fame. The painter, to shun it, might fly from London and his sitters to Earlham or Felpham, might muster his sketches and propose to himself the happiness of new labours, but it followed him and dogged his path. London was, or was supposed to be, unhealthy, and the painter took to sleeping at Hampstead, first riding, afterwards walking in the morning to his town studio. For a while he flattered himself that his evil spirit had left him. He bought land and erected a house after his own heart, and to his own plans in that healthful suburb. He had a large gallery for his works, a chamber where, as he lay, a magnificent view of the far-away city was before his eyes—an intervening country, not as now, covered with a tangled net of railways, where houses seem daily to grow out of the ground, but where sweet pastures and bright meadows sloped away to the quiet outskirts. Here again he dreamt of finishing his many subjects; but alas! the time was gone by, the power of his hand—the cunning of his art had fled. He thought of those he had left in the north, and in 1798 paid them at last a visit. No more the ambitious youth who had left wife and children in search of wealth and fame, but a poor broken-down hypochondriac. It is true that he came back awhile to find his house at Hampstead, his gallery, his studio, in every respect complete—to pay one more visit to Felpham and Hayley, but no less to find his utter inability to paint. His dream of ambition was at an end. He sold his house in Cavendish Square to Shee, and soon after quitted London, and saw it no more.

Hayley's influence over Romney seems, on the whole,

to have been unpropitious, since he nursed the painter's maudlin sensibility, encouraged him in the idle habit of mere sketching, and flattered many of his foibles and weaknesses. As his biographer, he is of course the painter's apologist, and has written a sort of rose-water account, wherein the painter's gravest errors are treated as venial foibles, and much that illustrates the conduct of his art, and the source of his inspiration, altogether suppressed. Of Emma Lyon, the woman of many vicissitudes, who sat as a model for his subjects, and by her beauty and graceful pose suggested so many Cassandras, Sapphos, St. Cecilias, &c., he has said little or nothing, until we find her in London with her intended husband; all mention being suppressed of the many years when her society excited the Art-power of the painter, and compensated, at least in a degree, for the voices that should have cheered his home.

This woman, whose life was so romantic, was born in Chester; the daughter of a poor servant, who wandered back from the old city, where her babe was born, to her native village in Flintshire. Emma herself was in after life a servant, a shopwoman, and again a servant in a tavern, the haunt of licentiousness, and the resort of actors, musicians, and artists. Seeking a naval captain on an errand of benevolence—to rescue a countryman from a press-gang—she obtained his release, but lost her character. She passed from one lover to another, cast off from them for her extravagance, and at length wandered the streets in the lowest state of degradation. Exhibited by a quack doctor, wrapped in a light veil, as the goddess Hygeia, she learnt to pose, and soon was engaged by the painters and sculptors of the day. To

Romney she was of infinite service; her beauty and elegance were portrayed in no less than fourteen finished pictures, while the unfinished subjects and portraits of her are innumerable. Eventually she enslaved Charles Greville, the nephew of Sir William Hamilton, who becoming overhead and ears in debt by her extravagance, took her with him to Italy, and was induced to abandon her to Sir William, who undertook to pay his nephew's debts. From Florence, where the uncle and nephew had met, she returned with Sir William to Naples. Here he lodged her in his apartments in the palace, which coming to the knowledge of the queen, raised her anger at what she considered a great scandal, which was only appeased by Sir William assuring her majesty that the lady was his wife. As Lady Hamilton she enslaved the queen, the princesses, and the whole court with her beauty and her seductive manners; and for a time, by her power over her husband and Nelson, ruled even in the troubled world of politics.

She must have been re-married to the ambassador, probably according to our ritual, in London, in 1791, as Romney's letters are then full of her visits, her *condescension*, and *her charms*. He writes to Hayley, in June, 1791 :—"At present, and the greatest part of the summer, I shall be engaged in painting pictures from the *divine lady*: I cannot give her any other epithet, for I think her superior to all womankind. I have two pictures to paint of her for the Prince of Wales," &c. And later in the same year :—"I dedicate my time to this charming lady; there is a prospect of her leaving town *with* Sir William, for two or three weeks. They are much hurried at present, as everything is going on

for a speedy marriage, and all the world following and talking of her; so that," he adds, "if she had not more good sense than vanity, her brain must have been turned." In this letter the painter speaks of four pictures he had commenced from his quondam model; and their variety shows either the versatility of her powers, or else how little of what is called "character" was needed in fitting a sitter to a subject in that "fancy picture" age. "The pictures I have begun," says he, "are Joan of Arc, a Magdalen, and a Bacchante for the Prince of Wales, and another I am to begin as a companion to the Bacchante." It will be seen that our version of the fair Emma's story, at this point of her life, differs somewhat from the usual narrative. It was taken down from the lips of the late Lord Northwick, who was at Naples on the return of the ambassador from Florence, knew the two intimately, and was present at various times when she entranced our great naval hero with her songs and her poses, which it would be out of place to describe here. A woman of rare attractions must the fair Emma have been; and that she had smitten the reverent poet, as well as the sensitive painter, seems evident. Shortly after her sitting for Magdalens and Joans, the painter is deeply depressed by some symptoms of coldness and neglect on the lady's part, and writes to his bosom friend to complain, when Hayley pens him an impromptu octave, beginning

> "Gracious Cassandra, whose benign esteem
> To my weak talent every aid supplied,
> Thy smile to me was inspiration's beam,
> Thy charms my model, and thy taste my guide;"

which he suggests the painter should transcribe and present to the lady with his own signature. The painter,

however, won her back by his own art; painting "the most beautiful head I have painted of her yet, and giving it to her for her mother;" and then she is spoken of as performing her enchantments in his house, "singing and acting before some of the nobility, with most astonishing powers." Her powers in this way must have indeed been very great; for the authority before alluded to used to describe her going, in a critical juncture, as a sort of ambassadress from Nelson, to induce the King of Naples, who had left in disgust, to return, when he was wiled back by the singing and music of this siren. On the death of her husband and of Nelson, she came to reside at Merton; but after a time gave herself up to corrupt inclinations and indulgences, that brought her to poverty and an exile's death, in Calais, in 1815.

But we must return to Romney. How did his long-neglected wife receive the man who had only come back to her when the pleasures of life had passed away; the man who had deserted the mother of his children in her young days, and had selfishly passed all his best years apart from her, nor allowed her to share his hopes, his fame, or the society that wealth had gathered around him? O wonder of woman's loving patient endurance during thirty years of cruel absence! She received him on his return without upbraiding; and "he had the comfort of finding an attentive, affectionate nurse in a most exemplary wife, who had never been irritated to an act of unkindness or an expression of reproach by his years of absence and neglect." So says his apologist, adding that "his early and long estrangement was the great error of his life, proceeding originally from mis-

taken ambition, and continuing from that pride by which men of quick apprehensive spirits are too frequently deterred from confessing and correcting their misconduct." There seems little doubt that his first error brought its own punishment. His solitary life conduced to that morbid temperament which made him fickle in his art—kept him from the society of his fellow-artists, as it did from his own family; grew deeper and deeper, as his pride, increasing with his success, placed a stronger barrier to his repentance, and finally drove him back, in his last misery, to the tender care of her who might have made life cheerful and prosperity delightful had she been allowed.

Romney's character was a strange anomaly. He could be sentimentally eloquent, no doubt, and speak tenderly, though his life was a long act of cruelty. A year before his own malady drove him to his long-shunned home he wrote thus of the widow of poor Hodges:—"I shall never forget when I found her at breakfast with her little children, her voice, her face, more enchanting than I ever thought them before: for the gratification of the same looks and voice, I think I could travel a hundred miles." Did he think of his own wife at Kendal? of his own children, whose youthful love he had never known? No; he solaced himself, as he tells us in the same letter, with having sold his "picture of the Indian woman" ("Titania and the Indian Votaress") "for a great price" to Beckford of Fonthill. Now, however, sickness and debility had taught him where alone true love and real sympathy were yet in store for him; but the knowledge reached him too late. He lingered awhile at Kendal, acknowledging, in his letters to his London

friends, the tender solicitude of his wife; longed earnestly for the return of his brother, who had risen to be a general in the Indian army, and who came just in time to see, and be doubtfully recognized by Romney, ere, as Cumberland says in his memoir of the painter, he sank into an inglorious grave in November, 1802.

When we endeavour to form an estimate of Romney as an artist, we are inclined to wonder at the position he held in his own day, and while Gainsborough and Reynolds were yet living; for whatever merit we may allow Romney as a painter, and he had great merit, yet we cannot compare him with either of these his contemporaries. He was enthusiastic and energetic, and full of a certain nervous sensibility that is akin to poetic genius. His imagination was more active than his perseverance, and he was easily excited to begin, and as easily tempted to lay aside, his work; even his portraits were left unfinished, and those he did complete do not give a full sense of completion: as far as observation went he endeavoured to overcome the imperfection of his early training, but downright labour to that end was easily laid aside. Could Art come by mere impulse, he would have been a great artist; certainly academies did not spoil him, for he wholly eschewed them. His sojourn in Italy led him to love and follow Correggio rather than the Venetians, and from him Romney derived a certain breadth and simplicity of manner that was apt to degenerate into generality and emptiness. His manner once fixed, we see none of the varied modes of execution, and of the preparation of the work that are so evident even from the very failures of Reynolds. We are told by his pupil, Robinson, that latterly he glazed his pictures much, and missed the pure

tints of his earlier works; but by glazing he must have meant "toning," since Romney's works are very solidly painted. He had little of the power of adding individuality to beauty, which we find in the portraits of Reynolds; there is far more of sameness, of a uniform type, both in the portraits and ideal heads of Romney, than in the man he was thought to rival. His colouring is void of variety of tint, and tends to red and brown, his flesh is apt to be rather bricky, and to want that luminous and golden glow which hardly any but Reynolds and the great Venetians have achieved, while his forms are unmodelled and devoid of bones. There is a pleasing breadth almost amounting to grandeur in some of his works, but it ever seems as if he had the power to carry them up to a certain point only, and could not complete them. If they have a flavour of Correggio, it is without his rich completing glazings, and rather as the works of that great artist appear after they have been, by the *skill* of the picture-cleaner, divested entirely of their richness of surface. Flaxman says, "His compositions, like those of the ancient paintings and basso-relievos, told their story by a single group of figures in the front, whilst the background is made the simplest possible, rejecting all unnecessary episode and trivial ornament, either of secondary groups or architectural subdivision." This is the criticism of a sculptor, and serves to support the charge, that as a painter his works are bald, and have a sense of emptiness.

Romney's art was rather largely represented at the autumn exhibition of the British Institution, in 1863, twenty-one of his works being hung in juxtaposition with some of those of his great rivals, Gainsborough and

Reynolds. Among these works were, of course, three or four Lady Hamiltons, with Serenas, Hebes, &c., most likely inspired by the same enchantress. Here was also the historical picture of "Newton Showing the Effects of the Prism," painted as a companion to "Milton Dictating to his Daughters." The figures are life size, and this picture is spoken of as one of his best works; it belongs to F. Chamberlayne, Esq. The drawing is poor and without much character, the flesh dirty and hot, and the treatment of action and expression weak and commonplace; there is little of dignity either in the personages represented or in the painter's Art. Another picture also belonging to Mr. Chamberlayne, "The Infant Shakspeare Surrounded by the Passions," is a work of more genius, one of the best we have seen by the painter: a figure in white hovering above the group, is finely treated. The heads in the picture, however, are out of proportion to the bodies, and the figures the less elegant on this account. The picture is rich in tone though unnaturally brown, but has suffered dreadfully from the use of improper pigments and vehicles.

The portraits exhibited on this occasion ranged over many periods of Romney's art. There among them was his "Wortley Montague in a Turkish Dress," the portrait painted at Venice in 1775, just ere the sitter's life was terminated by the inflammation arising from a bone sticking in his throat; a well painted and sensible picture; also a portrait of a lady with powdered hair, and the bosom seen through a muslin kerchief, belonging to Lieutenant-Colonel Crichton Stuart, finely and solidly painted and beautifully handled, and certainly better than many by Lawrence. Others in the collection, however,

were as bad as this was good, and it was singular to feel how weak and tame were his portraits of children—how weak he was where Reynolds was ever so strong. A portrait of Lord Stanley and his sister in their childhood—but beyond that infantile period to which we allude—is, however, a good specimen of the painter, the boy's head really good. But we may sum up all that is to be said of Romney in this, that whatever he did Reynolds had done far better; that his art did not advance the taste of the age, or the reputation of the school, and that it is quite clear, however fashion or faction may have upheld him in his own day, the succeeding race of painters owed little or nothing to his teaching.

Joseph Wright, called Wright of Derby, like Romney, was among the painters who were established in full practice before the foundation of the Royal Academy. He was born in Derby, 3rd September, 1734, and was the son of an attorney of that midland town. His first bent was towards mechanical contrivance. He then showed some tendency to Art, which his father perceiving, encouraged him to study, and in 1751 sent him to London and placed him under Hudson, then in the height of fashionable employment. After studying two years with the master of Reynolds, young Wright returned to Derby, and there practised his profession with some success, but subsequently feeling his deficient Art-knowledge, the young painter revisited the metropolis and the studio of his old master, remaining with him on the second occasion for fifteen months, after which he settled in his native town. Here he obtained the patronage of the neighbouring gentry, and painted many portraits, and also subject-pictures, such as "The

Orrery," "The Iron Forge," now the property of Lord Palmerston, and "An Experiment with the Air Pump," a work with the figures the size of life, which has lately been added by gift to our National Gallery. In all these the painter has sought to give the effect of artificial light, a walk of Art which he eventually made almost his own, treating both subject-pictures, and afterwards landscapes and marines, as lighted by fire-light, by conflagrations, or by moon-light, and rendering such treatments with much fidelity and truth. He continued to reside in Derby until 1773, and many of his best pictures, including those named above, were painted in this period.

In 1773 he married, and took that opportunity to visit Italy, where he remained two years, studying, it is said, the works of the great masters, especially those of Michael Angelo, from which he made many copies on a large scale. But however much the works in the Sistine Chapel may have impressed him at the time, they had little influence on his subsequent practice. During his residence in Italy, he made many landscape sketches, and collected a large amount of material, which enabled him on his return to practise this branch of Art largely, treating it also under his favourite effects of artificial light. While at Naples he was fortunate in seeing a memorable eruption of Vesuvius, when he carefully noted the effect of the flames on the noble scenery of the city and the bay. He also visited the caves at Capri, and the Grotto of Pausillipo, and on his return painted these subjects frequently, varying the effects and the accessories. Thus in the list of his pictures, Vesuvius, and Conflagrations of Vesuvius,

often recur, together with Cottages on Fire, Moonlights, Cavern-scenes, Sunsets, &c. Wilson, who admired Wright's artifice, used to say:—"Give me your fire-light, and I will give you my daylight." But Wright had no need to exchange, since he was well patronized in his day, and in a list of 164 of his works published after his death, there are only about twenty-five which have not the name of the proprietor to whom they belong or for whom they were painted.

When Wright returned to England in 1775, he went to reside at Bath. Gainsborough had just left, and he hoped to find a good opening for himself as a portrait painter. But he met with no encouragement, felt confident that he had enemies in that city, was wont to speak of the strife and envy of illiberal and mean-spirited artists, and lamented that his peace was disturbed, and his health injured; and after about two years returned to Derby, where he finally settled. In the midst of his relations, honoured by his townsmen, with ample professional employment, he had little inducement to leave it for the great metropolis, although often urged to do so. Here he continued to reside until 1797, when a lingering illness terminated his life on the 29th of August. As a portrait painter, judged by his best works, he was merely respectable. There is a painful solidity of execution, a want of quality and texture both in the flesh and the draperies, so that when placed beside the works of Reynolds or Gainsborough, his portraits remind us of the labours of the house-painter; they shew little variety of handling—flesh, drapery, sky, trees, all being executed in the same painty manner. He adopted a shadow colour, with a purplish hue, such as would result from Indian red and

blue-black, which prevails throughout his portraits, and gives them a heavy look, and has an unpleasant effect both in the shadows and half-tints. The colour in these works is defective, but in his subjects treated with artificial light, since tone rather than colour is sought, his defect as a colourist is less seen. His landscapes are large and simple in manner, but heavy and empty. In those where artificial effects are not attempted, he seems to have followed the manner of Wilson without the richness and fulness of his surface, or the fresh luminous air-tints of that neglected master. In his water he continued the conventional treatment of wavelets or ripples, which we find in Canaletti, and which led one of his critics to remark that Mr. Wright's water gave him the idea of vermicelli.

Some of his landscapes have sadly failed from the pigments and vehicle used in them, while others remain perfectly sound—those on which, in order to obtain an artifical effect, he had often to repeat his painting, are the most injured, such as his "Eruptions of Vesuvius;" while the simpler treatments, as the "Windermere" and other Lake Scenery, painted after his visit to Westmoreland in 1793, are in good condition, as are also most of his portraits.

Settled in Derby, practising his art in a place far removed from London, with which, in those days, the communication was difficult and slow, Wright's intercourse with his brother-artists was limited to sending an occasional picture to the Exhibition of the incorporated Society. When the Academy was formed, although he was at that time producing some of his best pictures—pictures which fully entitled him to a place among the

forty—his name was not included in the first list. On his return from Rome in 1775—perhaps for the sake of keeping up his practice while in London—he entered as a student in the Royal Academy, and in November, 1781, was elected an associate of the body. It has often been a cause of complaint and animadversion that he was never elected a full member, and he is said to have thrown up his diploma of associate in disgust. In a sketch of his life, written the year he died, we are told that "he felt a repugnance to send his works to an Exhibition where he had too much cause to complain of their being improperly placed, and sometimes even upon the ground, that, if possible, they might escape the public eye. This narrow jealousy, added to the circumstance of his being rejected as an R.A. at the time Mr. Garvey was a successful candidate, did not tend to increase his opinion of the liberality of his brethren of the profession. The Academy, however, being afterwards aware of the impropriety of thus insulting a man of his abilities, deputed their secretary, Newton, to go to Derby to *solicit his acceptance* of a diploma, which he indignantly rejected."

Anthony Pasquin, in his "The Royal Academicians, a Farce, 1786," gives this account of Wright's secession from the Academy, which he puts into the mouth of "Truth," one of his *dramatis personæ*:—"The inimitable Wright, of Derby, once expressed an ardent desire to be admitted a member of the Academy, but from what unaccountable reason his wishes were frustrated, remains as yet a secret to the world; but the sagacious or, rather, the envious brethren of the brush thought proper to thrust so eminent an artist on one side

to make way for so contemptible an animal as *Edmund Garbage*. They had scarcely invested this insignificant mushroom with diplomatic honours before they discovered that they had been committing a most atrocious, diabolical, and bloody murder upon two gentlewomen of great respectability and character, ycleped Genius and Justice; and the pangs of their wounded consciences became so very troublesome, that it was resolved, in a full divan, instantly to despatch Secretary Prig to Derby, with the diploma, and force those august privileges and distinctions upon the disappointed painter that he had before solicited in vain. But, alas! the expedition was inauspicious and unfortunate; the diploma was rejected with the most evident marks of contempt, and the secretary kicked as a recompense for his presumption."

These statements bear the tone of exaggeration; and we have searched the records of the Academy to learn the facts connected with Wright's retirement. We find that his competitor for the vacant place of academician, Mr. Garvey, was elected in 1783, having been for fifteen years in the lower rank of associate—Wright only fifteen months; and as there had only been one exhibition between Wright's election as an associate and Garvey's as an academician, there could hardly have been, as alleged, a systematic ill-treatment of Wright's works sent for exhibition, or any offence which he had not condoned by accepting the associateship. Further, Wright himself was elected an academician early in the following year, in February, 1784, having been for an unusually short time an associate; but he then refused to comply with the law of the Academy, which requires a member to present one of his works to

the Academy before receiving his diploma, and required his name to be removed from the list of associates.

All we know of Wright proves him to have been a man of a shy, nervous, melancholic temper, always ailing, and not suffering the less if his ills were only fancies. His portrait alone is a sufficient confirmation of this, but all accounts confirm it. Dr. Darwin, who was his friend, and was often consulted upon his imaginary complaints, once told him "he had but one thing more to recommend. He thought that it would do him good to be engaged in a vexatious lawsuit"—anything to divert the hypochondriac from dwelling upon himself. Hayley, the poet, with whom he was also intimate, "laments that his amiable friend Wright, of Derby, had laid the foundation of those cruel nervous sufferings which afflicted his latter years by excess of application during his residence in Italy;" and Wright himself, in a letter to the same friend, in August, 1783, says:—"A series of ill-health for these sixteen years past (the core of my life) has subjected me to many idle days, and bowed down my attempts towards fame and fortune. I have laboured under an annual malady some years four and five months at a time, under the influence of which I have now dragged over four months, without feeling a wish to take up my pencil." At such a time his election as royal academician was notified to him. We do not believe the amiable valetudinarian capable of "indignantly rejecting" the proffered honour; but we can well imagine him nervously sensitive upon the known duties and responsibilities which it must entail; and without calling up imaginary grievances and jealousies, can well comprehend his preference of

the quiet to which he had retired in his native town; and think that we here see the true causes which prompted him to decline the distinction.

Wright had never been more than an occasional exhibitor at the Royal Academy—indeed the account he gives of his own health would preclude us looking for him as a constant contributor. After his refusal of the Academy honours in 1784 we are not surprised to miss his name for two or three seasons, but in 1788 he reappears as the exhibitor of five landscapes. Again in 1789 he exhibits six landscapes and three subject-pictures, "A Boy with a Bladder," "A Girl Blowing a Charcoal Stick," and his well-known work, "The Dead Soldier, his Wife and Child;" but the letter "A" (associate) does not appear to his name after the year 1782. In 1790 he exhibited two subject-pictures; in 1791, "A Scene from the Winter's Tale;" and after that did not again exhibit till 1794, when his name appears for the last time, his works being "An Eruption of Vesuvius," and "A Village on Fire." We do not think that a man of Wright's disposition, if he had felt himself insulted by the Academy, would, on rejecting their honours, have continued to exhibit on their walls for the sake of any advantage he might have obtained, and we are inclined to discredit the whole of the tale. He died in 1797.

Having made a journey into the county expressly to see some of the works of this Derbyshire artist, we were shown many, both portraits, landscapes, and figure-subjects, reported to be amongst his best, but always disappointing to our expectations. It was, therefore, a source of real satisfaction when Mr. Edward Tyrrell presented to the National Gallery the picture we have

mentioned—"An Experiment with the Air Pump." We certainly should have placed Wright of Derby much lower as an artist had we not seen this very clever work. It differs from Lord Palmerston's picture of "The Forge," being far more vigorous, and the figures life size. The air-pump is on the table in the centre of a group, and the light placed within the machine radiates out on the surrounding faces of children, young men and maidens, and more aged spectators. The drawing and composition is satisfactory, and there is a great contrast in the character, expression, and the very varied attitudes of the several heads. The flesh of the faces is good in colour and most carefully modelled; indeed, the young woman on the right, in blue, and the lad drawing down a curtain to shut out the moonlight on the left, are worth especial observation for this quality. The draperies are all carefully painted from nature, (a merit apparent also in most of Wright's portraits,) and are in this respect very different from the sloppy negligence of some of the followers of Reynolds. There is a pretty little incident, rendered with feeling and true expression, in the group of two young girls, touched with childish sorrow and dread of what they are told is to be the result of "the experiment"—the death of the bird confined in the glass receiver of the machine.

The colour of the whole is pleasant, the execution firm and solid, and the brown shadows, although dark, are sufficiently rich and luminous, the picture very agreeable in general tone. Whatever has been the state of this work, it is satisfactory to find it so sound, and to have such a representation of this painter's art; yet on the whole it cannot be said that Wright's pictures have

added much to the reputation of the British school. As a portrait painter, he is hardly in the second rank. He had many contemporaries of greater merit, and it must be recollected that as he practised his art in his native town, and found his best patrons there, his works were little known to his metropolitan brethren. It is in such instances as those of Wright and Crome that a true National Gallery—a National Gallery of British Art is necessary to the just fame of the painters of the British school.

We will conclude with a graphic extract from the amusing writer of *Wine and Walnuts*, who, in his "Supper at Mortimer's," has only too well hit off Wright. "Upon my word, a delicate little hen-turkey, what a Christmas present already! This turkey is from my old fellow prentice, Joe Wright, said Mortimer (the painter), who never forgets us at Christmas. Poor Joe, the valetudinarian! I'd be sworn he procured one of the least in all Derby out of sheer compassion to our evil habits. He knows we always dress his Christmas turkey for supper, and he has generally a hint by way of postscript to his letter, touching the prevalence of apoplexy. Now Master Joe was one of your water-gruel disciples, when we were youngsters together at Hudson's; and I would wager ten pounds to a crown-piece he is now sitting, Peter Grievous, over that wishy-washy, tasteless, humdrum, drivelling dish, and calling to old Nan Watkins—'Nanny, have you any live coals? Do pray let me have my bed warmed.'"

CHAPTER X.

PROGRESS OF HISTORIC ART.

Attempts of the Royal Academy to promote Sacred Art—Offer to Decorate Saint Paul's Cathedral—Rejection of the Plan—Not to be lamented—Boydell's Shakspeare Gallery—Its Origin and Art described—Want of Success—Henry Fuseli, R.A.—His early Life—Attachment to Art—Dislike to Academies—Their true Uses—His own great Want of Elementary Training—Contributions to the Shakspeare Gallery—Publication of Macklin's Bible; And Poets' Gallery—Election of Fuseli into the Academy—Projects the Milton Gallery—Its sad Failure: And the probable Causes—His Works from Shakspeare and Milton compared—His Genius and Art.

VERY soon after the foundation of the Royal Academy a great movement took place in Art. Our artists were emulous to distinguish themselves; and, as a body, were desirous of engaging in works which should cultivate the taste of their countrymen for pictorial design. The members of the Academy led the way, and offered to decorate St. Paul's Cathedral, at their own expense, with appropriate paintings from Scripture subjects. They selected Reynolds, their president, West, Barry, Cipriani, Dance, and Angelica Kauffmann for this undertaking, and made this generous proposal in 1773, to the Dean and Chapter, in such terms as they hoped would insure its acceptance and success—offering to receive the suggestions of the Dean and Chapter for alterations or amendments of their works when completed, and to remove them if not finally approved. The issue is too

well known to need repetition. This noble offer was accepted by the Dean, who readily obtained the sanction of the King; but the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, who are the trustees of the cathedral, disapproved; and the latter (Bishop Terrick) strenuously opposed it as an artful intrusion of Popery, and the whole plan fell to the ground. Barry, as we have told, sought a relief for his disgust in the decoration of the great room of the Society of Arts; but the ardent desire of the body of artists ended only in disappointment.

Looking back from our present position, and with our advanced knowledge on the subject, we feel confident that this disappointment was on the whole for the advantage of Art. Had the proposal been acceded to, the artists would most likely have entered enthusiastically on their self-imposed labours; improperly educated and trained themselves, without a public to appreciate their works, and having to rely on their own resources, it is to be feared that their energies would have cooled before any considerable portion of the illustrations were completed. Moreover, the subject of mural decoration at that time had not received the consideration it has since obtained throughout Europe. The principles of pictorial art as an adjunct to architecture had not been in the least studied, and mere pictorial treatment would have undoubtedly prevailed. The vehicle in which the works would have been executed would most likely have been oil; and oil, with all the faulty and insecure pigments then and for a long time after in use. Had the proposal been carried out we might now be contemplating an incomplete series of works far advanced in ruin and decay, unsuited to their situation, incongruous with one

another from lacking the direction of a leading mind, and altogether affording an argument against rather than in favour of further attempts.

A few years later the members of the Academy warmly supported the plan of a "Shakspeare Gallery," which originated with Alderman Boydell. When a young man, John Boydell had been struck by an indifferent engraving, the work of Mr. Toms, probably from its accurate delineation of a scene familiar to him; and then at the age of twenty-one, and in spite of the wishes of his family, he walked up to London from Derbyshire, and apprenticed himself to the engraver by whose work he had been so suddenly impressed. Although his assiduity led to no eminence in his adopted art, by his enterprise and generous dealing he was enabled to found and foster a great school of engraving in England, and rose himself to opulence and distinction. Then he desired to accomplish for the painters' art what he had done for the engravers'. His great scheme of the Shakspeare Gallery arose in a conversation over the dinner-table, in November, 1786, when he entertained West, Romney, and Paul Sandby, with some other eminent men. Boydell expressed his desire, "old as he was, to wipe away the stigma that we had no genius for historical painting;" and in the discussion which arose the name of Shakspeare was mentioned by Nicol, the well-known printer, who was one of the guests; and the idea of the Shakspeare Gallery, which then took a form, was so steadily pursued, that early in 1789 the Gallery (the handsome gallery now occupied by the British Institution in Pall Mall) was finished, several of the paintings were completed, and the whole undertaking far advanced.

All the first artists were invited to assist, and received liberal commissions. Wilson and Gainsborough were no more; but Reynolds contributed his "Macbeth and the Witches," which in charity, as the work of his old age, we will not describe; and West, Barry, Opie, Northcote, Romney, and Stothard painted twenty-three of the eighty-eight works comprised in the collection; but we miss the name of Copley, then at the height of his reputation. The remaining works were contributed by twenty-two painters—among whom were Fuseli, eight works; Smirke, eight; Hamilton, seven; Westall, five; with others whose paintings, nay, even names, are almost forgotten. The artists were unrestricted as to the size of their works; and some injudiciously adopted a large scale, with figures the natural size. Some few of the paintings had great merit, and were not wanting in vigorous original conception and design; others were theatrical and extravagant, exaggerated by faulty composition and bad drawing; but the most common defect was the total absence of historic feeling, the display of mere common life prettily decked and draped; while some, indeed, whose only character was an attempted humour, closely approached caricature. Such are results we should naturally have anticipated in that period of our Art and Art-teaching, when two or three great men had attracted a number of imitators with the few of true genius who were to be their successors.

The collected works were exhibited to the public in the gallery built for them; and, as a part of the original scheme, were engraved and circulated throughout the country and on the Continent. They were, as we have said, of very mixed merit, but the magnitude of the

scheme, and the renown by which it was attended, no doubt assisted to create a public appetite for pictorial Art; while it is equally certain that generally the weakness of drawing, the want of power in the artists to enter into the manners and habits of the time and the characters represented, would hardly be tolerated now, and justifies the neglect into which the greater part of the works have fallen. Need we tell the painful end of Boydell's great enterprise, undoubtedly commenced with higher motives than the mere love of gain. In sixty years of active life he had accumulated a capital of 350,000*l.*, which he sunk to found a school of engraving and of historic painting. He had purposed to leave to the nation the gallery he had erected, and the works painted to illustrate his country's great dramatic poet; but the disturbance of all his commercial relations with the Continent by the breaking out of the French Revolution, paralyzed his extensive trade, and at the age of eighty-five he sought of Parliament the power to sell by lottery his galleries, pictures, drawings, and stock, that "he might be able to pay all that he owed in the world," and was taken from the world just as this last request had been granted.

Henry Fuseli, R.A., was the promoter of a scheme like Boydell's. He was the most poetical, as also the most original of the group of painters on which we are now entering. Born at Zurich on the 7th of February, 1741, he was the second son of John Casper Füessli, himself a painter of portraits and landscapes—a man otherwise endowed with learning and talents, and the intimate associate of men of varied acquirements, whose names are still held in honour. The elder

Füessli did not wish his son to follow his own profession. Though he showed very early a strong predilection for the Arts, he was forbidden to think of them, since his father intended him for the clerical profession. We are told that his dislike to his son's being an artist might partly have arisen from the boy's awkwardness, and want of manual dexterity, which was so great as to have resulted in a family saying: "Take care of that boy, for he destroys or spoils whatever he touches;" a defect which in after life was seen in the great want of executive power apparent in his pictures. But Fuseli's love of Art was not to be checked, and he followed secretly what it was denied him to work at openly. The hours of night, when the family were at rest, were devoted to his pursuit of Art, and even thus early his efforts were marked with a tendency to the extravagant, either on the side of the burlesque or the terrible. In order to prepare the lad for his future duties, he was put in charge of a tutor, who read aloud to him the works of those theologians which formed part of his course of study. But while the tutor read, the pupil drew, and the better to escape observation, learnt to use his left hand, which was attended with this advantage, that he was enabled to use either freely during his after life. Removed to the country for the benefit of better air, he seems to have enjoyed with great zest the new scenes and new objects brought within his observation. But his father was not a man to change the determination he had made, and when arrived at a proper age, the future painter, returning to Zurich, entered the Caroline college in that city, and finally obtained the degree of Master of Arts. While at

college, he had for fellow-students many very remarkable companions, among others the well-known Lavater, with whom he afterwards kept up a constant intercourse, and whose mind, innately sympathizing with the mysteries of spiritualism and demoniacal possession, must have had some influence on one, in many respects, so like-minded as Fuseli. While at college, Fuseli made himself acquainted with various modern languages, and among others perfected himself in English: learning to read and enjoy the works of Milton, Shakspeare, and the painter Richardson, in their native tongue.

It is told of him that at college he was very satirical, and that he discovered and exposed the weak points in the character and disposition of some of the tutors and professors, sometimes using his pencil instead of his pen for that purpose, and resorting to caricature. It will be well remembered by many of his colleagues, and of the students in the Royal Academy during his keepership, that this satirical temper never left him. After passing the prescribed time at college, Fuseli fulfilled the wishes of his father, and in 1761, together with his friend Lavater, entered into holy orders, and preached his first sermon before the *literati* of Zurich, from the text of Paul in the Areopagus:—"What will this babbler say?" We are told that his discourses, though appreciated by the learned, were caviare to the multitude. He might, however, have continued in the duties of the holy office, and been lost to the world of Art, had not his strong sense of justice united him with Lavater in exposing the land-bailiff, or ruling magistrate of the canton, who had been guilty of peculation and injustice. For a time the two friends triumphantly

succeeded, but in the end, the powerful family connexions of the magistrate made Zurich too hot for the young divine, and in 1763 he was advised, for a while at least, to quit the city. He spent some time in visiting various German cities, and at Berlin began his professional career by furnishing eight illustrations for Bodmer's *Noachide*, but was eventually induced to visit England with a view of establishing a channel of literary communication between Germany, Switzerland, and our own country. He left Germany in company with the British Minister at the Court of Prussia, and arrived in London at the close of the year 1763. Sir Andrew Mitchell, the Minister named, introduced him to several persons, among others, to Mr. Coutts, for whom he afterwards painted several pictures, and whose friendship he maintained through life.

Fuseli's first lodgings in London were in Cranbourn Alley, a locality where Hogarth had resided before him, but which is now removed to make way for the broad street of the same name. At first he was employed in literary labour — translating works from the French, German, and Italian, for Andrew Millar and Joseph Johnson, publishers of that day; occasionally varying this drudgery by designing book illustrations for novels. At the end of the year 1766, an offer, too advantageous to be rejected, was made to Fuseli to travel as tutor to Viscount Chewton, son of the Earl of Waldegrave, an office for which his independent manner and irritable temper particularly disqualified him. We cannot therefore wonder that, having accepted it, he managed to quarrel with, and even to strike, his pupil,

whom he left in France, "determining," as he said, "to be a bear-leader no longer." On his return to England in 1767 he sought an introduction to Sir Joshua Reynolds, in order to obtain his advice in the prosecution of his plan of making the Fine Arts his future profession.

The great portrait painter received Fuseli with his usual urbanity, and seemed much struck with the originality and style of the designs he exhibited to him. "How long," said he, "have you been from Italy?" "I have never seen that country of the Arts," was the reply. Reynolds is said to have expressed his surprise, to have requested copies of some of the drawings, and to have ended by assuring Fuseli that, "were he at his age, and endowed with the ability of producing such works, if any one were to offer him an estate of a thousand a year, on condition of being anything but a painter, he would unhesitatingly refuse the offer." Allowing something for the future president's suavity and desire to please, there was sufficient to encourage him to persevere, and Fuseli began at once to improve himself in drawing and to work in oil. Reynolds further encouraged him, on seeing his first work—"Joseph Interpreting the Dreams of Pharoah's Chief Butler and Chief Baker"—by saying that "he might, if he would, be a colourist as well as a draughtsman." Looking at the quality of tone, and disposition of colour in many of his works, there seems to have been some ground for the president's judgment: but Fuseli had had no proper education in Art; he was too impatient to go through the trials of processes and modes of execution, which Reynolds himself was continually making; he was satisfied by *feeling out* what he

wanted in colour and effect by the easiest means that would give him present satisfaction; and this resulted, not only in his *not* attaining to the rank of a colourist, but in the early and total destruction of many of his pictures. His biographer, Knowles, tells us that "until he was twenty-five years of age, he had never used oil colours, and he was so inattentive to these materials that during his life he took no pains in their choice or manipulation. To set a palette, as artists usually do, was with him out of the question; he used many of his colours in a dry powdered state, and rubbed them up with his *pencil* only, sometimes in oil alone, which he used largely, at others with an addition of a little spirit of turpentine, and not unfrequently in gold size." How could such carelessness result in anything but premature decay?

Having determined at last to adopt painting as a profession, Fuseli, now nearly twenty-nine years of age, turned his thoughts towards Italy, the seat of the Arts, and instead of a patient attempt to supply his defective education, set out for Rome to fill his mind with the efforts of the great Italian artists, his means of producing the great ideas they might force on him being lamentably deficient. Really he was at this time neither a draughtsman nor a painter, and had attained an age, when it is difficult to set down to that dry elementary study, which is so necessary in order to obtain executive power. He arrived in Rome early in the spring of 1770, and shortly afterwards changed the spelling of his name from Füessli to Fuseli, to accommodate it to the Italian pronunciation. While in Italy he seems to have made earnest study of the antique and the works of Michael Angelo. We do

not hear that he drew much; we are told that he made no copies, and that while he sometimes attended in the school of the living model, he was averse to dissecting. From all this we gather that he occupied himself rather in studying style from the antique, and endeavouring to attain the great manner of the great Florentine, than in laborious efforts after refined drawing from the one, or the deep knowledge of the figure of the other. We know that Fuseli did not admire academies, which he considered were "symptoms of art in distress."

Much has been said against academies and academic training, that they stiffen and stereotype the minds of those brought up in them: this may undoubtedly be the case where the routine is laid down too strictly, the modes of thought and rules of practice enforced too hardly and rigidly. This fault, however, is not a necessity of such institutions; it has even been observed that our Royal Academy does not enforce proper attention to principles, the endeavour having always been to leave individual taste and feeling to develope themselves; a sound training being given in what may be called the art-language, through which the student hopes hereafter to manifest his thoughts to the world; and this is the true use of academies. During the time of youth, when the student is not too much occupied with professional cares and the necessity of painting works for fame, he is enabled in such institutions to attain skill as a draughtsman, to learn the executive processes of painting, and all the traditions of the painter's art. Fuseli had never had the advantage of academic training; indeed, from the walk in life for which, at his father's command, he had fitted himself, he had been prevented obtaining any artistic

training whatever, and in this state, with a mind of high poetic powers, he was brought face to face with the works of one whose mind corresponded with the fierce and fervid nature of his own. He appears to have been absorbed in the works of Michael Angelo. He wrote to Northcote from Lugano on his way back to England, "Madness lies on the road; I must think over to come to you, and at the sound of Rome my heart swells, my eye kindles, a frenzy siezes me." He attained, by the study of the Sistine Chapel, an imitative boldness and grandeur of design that surprised the feeble Italians maundering on in the inane repetition of the insipid Art of Maratti and Mengs. "Behold!" said they, "Michael Angelo is come again?"

But how much Fuseli needed that elementary training which had led Michael Angelo into the full power of expressing his noble thoughts, is evident to any one examining the works of the Swiss painter. Grand in invention, revelling in the mystic and terrible, and with a wild energy of action that defies the charge of being theatrical, bordering as it does on the fearful; having indeed a formed and marked style, he yet entirely fails to satisfy us. He has no refinement nor accuracy of drawing, many of his attitudes are impossible; his females are somewhat more than masculine, they are absolutely coarse and at times disgusting; while, as has already been said, his entire want of knowledge of the elementary laws of colouring and processes of painting, not only hindered him from developing his innate sense of colour, but from the imperfect methods he resorted to, have left us too often to contemplate fading ghosts and moribund canvases. The only thing that can be said on the other

side is, would not a sound elementary education have tamed down his originality and poetic feeling, while giving him the language in which to express it? The great man whom he worshipped began to study young, placing himself at the boyish age of fourteen in the school of Ghirlandaio, the best studio then open to him; studied during a long life, drawing and dissecting at all opportunities; in his old age still glorying in being a student, and leaving behind him sketches of himself with a band of youths gathered around him, drawing from the living model; while Fuseli, on the contrary, having adopted an idea of the human form, continued thus to depict it, and rarely reverted to the living model, either to correct impossible action or to obtain a varied individuality. "The life puts me out," he used to say; that is, it disturbed the abstract idea of form with which he had possessed himself, and which, with its coarse vigour, was more within his power to express than the delicate and subtle changes of the living form.

Fuseli remained in Italy until the autumn of 1778, having passed more than eight years in Rome and the other Italian cities. During his stay he had sent two pictures to the Royal Academy, but of his other labours we are less informed. Knowles tells us that "he did not spend his time in measuring the proportion of the several antique statues, or in copying the frescos or oil pictures of the great masters of modern times; but in studying intensely the principles upon which they had worked, in order to infuse some of their power and spirit into his own productions." And in this he certainly succeeded; for, if he was unable to profit by the purity and refinement of Raphael, of whom Fuseli himself said

that "propriety rocked his cradle," he imbibed so much of the feeling and power of Buonarotti, that we may boldly say no painter, before or since, has entered in the same degree into the spirit of that master. On his way back to this country, he made a stay of some months in his native city, painting various pictures, among others, "The Confederacy of the Founders of Helvetian Liberty," which he gave to the senate-house at Zurich, where it is still preserved. His father had at this time an opportunity of seeing the works of his painter son, and was able to estimate, and take delight in, the talents which were shortly to place him high in the rank of modern artists.

On his journey to Rome, Fuseli had set forth in company with the poet Armstrong, but both being of an irritable temper, they quarrelled and parted on no pleasant terms at Genoa. On his return to England Fuseli was reproved by Mr. Coutts for his rudeness to the doctor, and being told that he was in a dying state, in the warmth of a generous nature, went to call on him. He was admitted to the sick man's chamber, who saluted the painter with "So you have come back?" "Yes, I have come *home*," was the reply. "Come, you mean, to London, the needy villain's general home," said the poet. "However, I thank you for this visit; you find me in bad plight, but I am glad to see you again." Such rough-spoken natures were hardly suited to companion together; but it was the last time of their meeting, for the doctor died soon after.

On Fuseli's arrival in London, he took a part of the house of Cartwright, a painter, whom he had known in Rome, and who now resided in St. Martin's Lane, and

began to labour diligently on poetic subjects; sending three pictures to the Exhibition in 1780; and in 1782, a work called "The Nightmare," which by repetitions and engravings soon became very popular, and was engraved for and published by J. R. Smith, who allowed that he made a profit of 500*l.* by the speculation, Fuseli himself having only received 20*l.* for the picture.

Hitherto Fuseli had relied on the patronage of individuals, or on the chance of finding a sale for his pictures with a view to their being engraved; but in 1786, Alderman Boydell's scheme for obtaining a series of pictures from the plays of Shakspeare, to be engraved for publication, was set on foot, and Fuseli was one of those whose assistance was considered of the first importance. He entered zealously into the project. He painted eight large, and one small picture for this series; among them some of his finest works, to which we shall have occasion to revert. While these pictures were in hand, and Fuseli's pencil in full operation, he married Miss Rawlins of Bath Easton, and it is said that prudential motives, viz., the certainty in case of his death of a small provision for his widow, induced him to overcome his objections to such institutions, and to become a candidate for membership in the Royal Academy. Whether this was really the cause, or whether, as we believe, he had worthier and better motives, he put down his name and was elected an associate in the autumn of 1788, and in 1790, a full member of the Royal Academy. On the occasion of his election a disagreement arose, which resulted in the temporary resignation of the presidentship by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and had nearly ended in his final retirement.

Shortly after, on the completion of the Boydell pictures, Fuseli was led to project a work of his own. The Boydell gallery had succeeded in drawing crowds. Visitors had flocked to that tame piece of classic art, the "Orestes and Pylades" of West, and Fuseli wrote to Roscoe that in imitation "of *so great a man*" (West) "I am determined to lay, hatch, and crack an egg for myself too, if I can. What it shall be, I am not yet ready to tell with certainty; but the sum of it is a series of pictures for exhibition, such as Boydell's and Macklin's." Macklin's publications to which Fuseli referred, were his "British Poets," commenced in 1788, and dropped in the following year; and the Bible—known as "Macklin's Bible"—commenced in 1792, and which, dying in 1800, he just lived to complete. These works were undertaken on the same plan as Boydell's. The first was certainly lower in character than the "Shakspeare." But the Bible was a work of a higher class, and more equal in its illustrations. It enjoyed deservedly a high reputation, though it cannot be compared to more recent illustrated books. When Fuseli's scheme was matured it took the shape of a gallery of illustrations of Milton. He determined to paint a series of pictures from our great epic poet, and to exhibit them together for his own benefit. He had saved a little money from the completion of his engagements with Boydell, which gave him the means of proceeding some length with the task he undertook; and when this was exhausted, six of his friends came forward liberally to assist him by advancing money for his support until the pictures he purposed to paint for his exhibition were completed; besides which, one or two of them made him handsome donations in aid of his attempt.

Forty pictures of the most lofty range as to subject, and some of them on canvases of the grandest scale, were opened to the public in the rooms in Pall Mall previously occupied by the Royal Academy. The exhibition was called the Milton Gallery, and Fuseli was proud that the whole should be the work of his own hands, refusing the proffered assistance of Lawrence and Opie, which as the scheme progressed was offered to him. Alas! however, for those who trust to the good taste of the British public for support. The shillings came slowly in, and the painter was often the lonely occupant of his own gallery, the season wore on and passed away, and at the end of it the receipts had not sufficed to pay for the expenses. Still, hoping against hope, the persevering painter completed during the recess six additional works, and re-opened in the spring of 1800 with forty-six pictures, the Academy leading off with a public dinner in the room, to endeavour to awaken attention to this great effort of genius. The painter tells us he "had much mouth-honour" on the occasion, but the public did not respond; this season was as unproductive as the former one had been, and at the end of four months Fuseli closed the exhibition rather than carry it on at a loss.

It is sad to have to record the utter failure of a scheme that had so long occupied the mind and hand of a man of true genius; the more so that we find other and less gifted works exhibited to the public with far different results. What was the cause of the failure? Fuseli is said to have set it down to the opposition of the press and the jealousy of the members of the Royal Academy, to whom he attributed some of the most

obnoxious criticisms on his works; but this could hardly be the case. It is true that such separate exhibitions tend to diminish the only source of the Academy's income, and the body are always sorry to miss the works of a member from their own walls; but the Academy seems to have come forward to do what was possible to aid Fuseli, and we are told by his own biographer, that many of its members deeply lamented the ill-success of the attempt. As to the press, even angry criticisms are better than apathy and neglect; and it is rare that a man is not supported by one party if another unfairly vilifies him, in which case the public go to see and judge for themselves. The truth seems rather to be, that our painter, like many of his brethren, was no man of business, and did not take the means to awaken public interest and curiosity by those stimulating arts so successfully resorted to in our own day; arts by which some audacious *entrepreneur* puffs into profitable notoriety works of second or third rate merit, by means of paid paragraphs, unceasing advertisements, and all those little second-hand schemes that no artist who respects himself can enter upon, but which make works intrinsically worthless, like well-puffed quack medicines, a valuable commodity and a source of handsome profit.

Fuseli's pictures were indeed not of a nature to appeal to the eye, but to the mind of the public; and mind is but too much wanted in common sight-seers. This Fuseli found when questioned by one of the visitors to his gallery who did not know him. "Pray, sir, what is that picture?" "It is the bridging of Chaos; the subject from Milton." "No wonder," said the ques-

tioner, "I did not know it, for I never read Milton, but I will." "I advise you not," said Fuseli; "for you will find it a d—d tough job."

Meanwhile, Fuseli had been elected professor of painting, for which his knowledge and classical attainments so well fitted him, and in 1801 delivered his first course of lectures to the students of the Royal Academy. In 1804, on the death of Wilton, he was appointed to the keepership, and resigned the lectureship, which Opie, and, on his death, Tresham, was elected to fill; but Tresham in the end declined on the plea of indisposition, and Fuseli was re-elected, and held the keepership, with the office of professor of painting, during the remainder of his life. For more than twenty years he filled these offices, with satisfaction to himself and credit to the institution. When we recollect the great men who were formed wholly or partly during his keepership, we may estimate the influence he had on those around him. Among these, Hilton, Wilkie, Etty, Mulready, Haydon, Leslie, Jackson, and Ross have passed away; while Landseer, Eastlake, and others still with us, evidence the sound training obtained in the Royal Academy while Fuseli was the keeper. He continued to paint, if with less ardour than formerly, until the last days of his life. Just before his last illness he had sent two pictures to the Academy for exhibition, one of them in an unfinished state, hoping to have time to glaze and tone it during the varnishing days; and he was employed just previous to his death on a scene from King John, which was nearly completed when he died. He was seized with his last illness while on a visit at the house of the Countess of Guildford, at Putney, and died there on the 16th of April, 1825.

He exhibited on the walls of the Royal Academy, from 1774 to 1825, sixty-nine pictures—seventeen of which were from Shakspeare, five from Milton, and eight from other British poets. To these must be added the forty-six pictures of the Milton Gallery, those for the Shakspeare Gallery, and other works not exhibited in the Royal Academy. Many of these were of large size; and, taken as a whole, they bear testimony to the great imaginative power and vigorous production of the painter.

Fuseli certainly derived more from Michael Angelo than others of our British painters who have made the Sistine Chapel their study. More of the terrible and grand, more of that largeness of treatment and noble simplicity that lifts us out of and above common nature. His figures are never tame, indeed, they are too apt to err on the side of violent and overstrained action; as in the fiery energy of his "Lear," when he thrusts out his tender, true-hearted daughter; or his "Prospero reproving Caliban." Such actions, however, rarely offend us; rarely give the feeling of being vulgar or theatrical. Sometimes they are truly grand, as in "The Lazar House;" or, better still, in the terrible struggle of Horatio to hold back the frantic Hamlet from following the ghost of his murdered father. The perturbed spirit, monstrous in length of limb, strides like a Colossus across the rampart's edge; his very armour seems to ring, and the ground to tremble under his heavy tread; the fiery eye-balls gleam from out the shadowy helm; the head itself blots out the lurid and watery moon. The armed king is in hazy shadow, edged with the moon's glimpses; the very sea is tost in tremulous and yeasty waves by

the chill blasts that bear the wandering spirit. We heed not that the action is overstrained and forced, the drawing incorrect, for the picture is replete with poetry and feeling; a striking contrast to the insipid, feeble renderings of his contemporaries Wheatley and Hamilton.

In the great works of the Sistine Chapel there is a tendency to exalt the physical as the exponent of the intellectual; mental power is too often expressed by mere largeness of limb, vigour of action, or grandeur of proportion. The same tendency to confuse physical force and energy with intellectual power is still more evident in Fuseli. Thus his Prospero is tall and muscular, the limbs knit into energetic action; but with little of the character of feature or expression that would remind us of the tender father of Miranda, or of that

> "Prospero the prime duke, being so reputed
> In dignity; and for the liberal arts
> Without a parallel."

With much that is noble and dignified in *style*, Fuseli adopted from the great Florentine much that is mere manner—much that is conventional and untrue. Such as distorted and extravagant action, forced muscularity both in his male and female figures, disproportionate extremities, limbs far beyond Nature's length, and draperies, that are no draperies, fitted tight to display the form. In some of his figures the great Florentine bent the hand unnaturally at the wrist, with a strong action of the index finger. Fuseli adopted this, and used it so frequently, that it is one of the characteristics of his figures, as in the Lear, and Prospero, already spoken of. Again, his figures, whether classic, Scandinavian, or mediæval, are ever

the same race,—have the same individuality, and, from Fuseli's seldom having recourse to Nature, the heads have a likeness and character in common. The head of Œdipus or of Prospero is but another version of that of Lear—the same long tangled curling locks, the same bushy pendulous eyebrows, from under which the same fiery and restless eyes look out; all are alive with the same fierce and vehement energy; there is even little difference in the way he clothes and drapes them. His women, too, are all alike; alike in their unwomanly coarseness, alike in their masculine and forced attitudes; Goneril crosses her brawny arms as Hotspur might do. But then the painter is never commonplace; he always carries us away with him into a poetic region of his own—a region apart from the everyday world we live in; and if we cannot agree that it is the same that Shakspeare or Milton would picture to us, it is at least a dream-land in which we awaken to sublime thoughts and curious pleasures too often wanting in the works of those who are more literal or more faithful to their text.

As an illustrator of our native poets, Fuseli was more successful with Milton than with Shakspeare. The poetry of the former is so entirely removed from the literal and individual—so apart from time, place, and age, that we readily receive it as rendered by Fuseli, our minds not being pre-occupied on such subjects as "The Lazar House," "The Conflict between Sin and Death," or "Satan starting up at the touch of Ithuriel's spear." Shakspeare, on the contrary, is English to the core, intensely English in thought and feeling; he imbues even the heroes of classic times with the senti-

ments and thoughts of Englishmen: and in those subjects which are English in origin, or from English history, not only is Shakspeare identified with the national feeling, but the national feeling has given a form and substance of its own—individualized as it were the characters of his dramas. This Fuseli could not and did not enter into; but if we take him from his own stand-point, his pictures are fine poetical exponents of the drama, if not such as we Englishmen should render them. He wisely seized for illustration the most poetical plays of our great poet; those that abound in the supernatural—the ghostly terrors of *Hamlet*, the spiritual agency of the *Tempest*, or the fairy incidents of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The pictures from this last play are among his very best, and in them he has shown his power of adding humour and fancy to the grandeur of his conceptions. Thus the "Bottom with the Ass's Head," is perhaps one of his best pictures from this fairy-drama. Bottom, large of limb, and with the coarse strength of churlish breeding —his brute-like nature intensified by the ass's head, is grand in style, and contrasts well with the figure of the fondling Titania, somewhat lavish of her charms it is true, but made elegant and refined by the small life-size which the painter has adopted to contrast her elfin form with the loutish weaver. The attendant sprites are fanciful; some fairy-like, as Moth, Pease-cod, and Cobweb; some weird and gnome-like, such as the little herculean goblin with owl-like eyes, on the left, and the hoary-bearded hermit-gnome, which a fairy leads like a puppy-dog by a string. The picture is simply and firmly executed; there is greater

beauty in the female heads than is usually found in Fuseli's works; the tone is good, and there are not wanting indications of sweet passages of colour. It is the property of Mr. Carrick Moore, of Bolton Street.

Fuseli was quite indifferent to propriety of costume, treating, as has been said, ages and countries far separated, in the same draperies. Thus in the above picture, we find the head of one of the fairies fantastically covered by a cottage-hat tied under the chin; another, with the frizzed and powdered hair, the head-dress of feathers worn by the court ladies of the painter's day. One again reminds us of the sitting child in Reynolds' infant academy; and the hermit led by a classic fairy, is dressed in the robes of a mediæval monk. In the Lear we have the same anomalies; the *mise en scène* is anything but early British: the men are shaven as by a modern razor, the ladies have long curled locks and drooping feathers, and arms and armour are of a date quite inconsistent with any time or place to which we can ascribe this, in itself, somewhat incongruous play.

Fuseli, partly from the failure of his works—many of which have gone wholly to decay—and partly from their large size, which has confined them to the walls they originally occupied, is better known in the present day by engravings from his pictures, than by the pictures themselves. Turning over the pages of Boydell, he stands apart from all the other illustrators. His bold energetic style—the wildness and originality of his inventions, were fitted to take great hold of the imagination of the young, and there is no doubt that he had great influence over the minds of the students

of his day. They liked the man; and even the sharp bitter sarcasms with which he at times reproved them were forgotten as soon as uttered, since at heart he was kindly, and wished them well, and treated their wild pranks as the boisterous fun of boys, which it is better should find vent than be repressed.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SUCCESSORS OF REYNOLDS.

Nathaniel Dance, R.A.—Travels in Italy—His Portraits—Opinion upon his Art—Quits the Profession—*James Northcote, R.A.*—Apprenticed to his Father, a Watchmaker—Early Love of Art—Commences Portraiture—Introduced to Reynolds—Becomes his Favourite Pupil—Visits Italy—On his Return has Recourse to Portraits—Then Tries Domestic Subjects—Boydell's Gallery affords him Subjects in High Art—"Murder of the Princes in the Tower"—Elected Royal Academician—His "Wat Tyler" compared with Opie's "Rizzio"—Effect of Opie's Picture upon Northcote—His Pictures for the Shakspeare Gallery—Defective Manner of Painting—Absurd Inconsistencies in Costume—Common to the Art of the Time—His Industrious and Idle Servant Girl—Criticism on this Serial Picture—His Animal Painting and Fables—Writings on Art—Personal Character—*James Opie, R.A.*—His Early Life—Connection with Dr. Wolcot—Who Introduces him in London—Impression made by him—His First Success—Followed by Neglect—Unhappy Marriage and Divorce—He regains Sitters—And Paints Subject-Pictures—"David Rizzio"—Elected into the Academy—His Presentation Picture—Criticism on that and the "Rizzio"—His True Genius and Powerful Intellect—Opinion upon his Works for the Boydell Gallery—His Second Marriage—Perseverance and Love of his Art—His Writings—*Sir William Beechey, R.A.*—His Early Life—Becomes Enamoured of Art—Commences Portraiture—Gains Favour at Court, and Royal Patronage—His Equestrian Portrait of George III.—His Pupil "Bees-wing Sharpe"—His Pictures at the Guildhall—Neglected Condition of the Paintings there.

In considering the merits of the successors of Reynolds, the thought intrudes, that the beautiful and distinguished of his day were, indeed, fortunate, in that posterity knows them as perpetuated by his charming pencil, which, even where family affections have failed, by the value

it has given to their likenesses, has rescued them from the cobwebs which so often obscure the works of those who preceded and of those who followed him. Not that our school was left without men who could paint a good portrait-likeness, possessing many real qualities in art, but that the genius which could raise portraiture out of the level of commonplace was not with them, and that the rare talent of a Reynolds or a Gainsborough was not to be the inheritance of every generation. The painters whom we purpose to notice as the representatives of the portraiture of this period, though the followers of these great men, were by no means their servile imitators. While they could not, however, have failed to improve by the study of the great works of their predecessors, they were nevertheless original and independent, both in the conception and treatment of their subjects, and in their modes of execution.

The first in priority of date was *Nathaniel Dance, R.A.*, who is best known in art by this name, though he afterwards became Sir Nathaniel Holland, Bart. He was the son of the city surveyor, and was born in London in 1734. He commenced the study of art under Frank Hayman, and sought to improve himself in Italy. Here he remained eight or nine years, and travelled with the fair paintress, Angelica Kauffman, with whom gossip said he was hopelessly in love. On his return to England he distinguished himself by his portraits and as a history-painter, exhibiting a "Death of Virginia" with the Society of Artists in 1761. Among his paintings may be mentioned "Garrick as Richard III.," "Timon of Athens," in the Royal Collection, "Captain Cook," at Greenwich Hospital, and at Lady Featherstone's Up-

Park, Sussex, fine full-lengths of George III. and his young Queen. Dance's portraits were carefully and solidly painted, well drawn, and passable in colour. Northcote says, "He drew the figure well, gave a strong likeness and certain studied air to all his portraits; yet they were so stiff and forced that they seemed as if just out of a vice." His works, however, held a place in art which entitles them at least to brief mention. He was one of the original members of the Royal Academy, and resigned his diploma in 1790, on his marriage with a widow lady of large property. He afterwards took the name of Holland, was created a baronet in 1800, and for many years represented the borough of East Grinstead in Parliament. He virtually quitted his profession when he left the Academy, but he afterwards exhibited some landscapes which showed great ability.

James Northcote, R.A., fills a much larger space in the history of art. He was the son of a watchmaker at Plymouth, where he was born October 22, 1746, and though he evinced an early attachment to art, was, by his prudent father, bound his apprentice and learnt his trade. During the long seven years of his apprenticeship he gave his spare time to drawing, and, on their termination, devoted himself wholly to art. If Fuseli may be quoted as an example of genius, Northcote may be, assuredly, as the pattern of perseverance. Brought up to a trade, with an education which confined him to his own language, with only such knowledge of the history and poetry of his country as he got up for his subjects, he yet gained a name and rank both as a history-painter and a writer who will fill a place in the literature of his profession. He commenced by portrait painting, and

contrived so far to make his art known in Plymouth as to gain the notice of Dr. John Mudge, and, through him, an introduction to Sir Joshua Reynolds. This was, probably, the turning-point in his fortunes. In his twenty-fifth year, without having had the means of obtaining the proper elementary training, we find him courageously setting to work to supply the loss of ten years' time. He became the pupil of Reynolds, was admitted not only to his studio, but into his house, and was fortunate in gaining the friendship of the painter whom he reverenced. During a second apprenticeship of five years as the pupil of Reynolds, he had full opportunity of acquiring the technical knowledge he must have so greatly needed. He stood beside Reynolds before his easel; he enjoyed free converse with him; he saw his works in all stages; he assisted in their progress, laying in draperies, painting backgrounds and accessories, and forwarding the numerous duplicates and copies required of such a master, and he shared the usual means of advancement and study enjoyed by Reynolds' pupils; at the same time he did not neglect the essential study of the figure at the Royal Academy. In 1775 he had completed his engagement. He was in his twenty-ninth year, and thought the time had arrived when his pupilage should finish, and so did Reynolds. They parted with mutual regret, and Northcote returned to Devonshire, where, by portrait painting, he soon made a little purse. Then, with no loss of the confidence which led him to commence Art, and stirred by the desire to paint history, he resolved to visit Italy—the dream of all young painters—for his further improvement.

We find him for the first time an exhibitor at the

Royal Academy in 1776, when he made his debût with the stock subject of young portrait painters, "An Old Man's Head," and, as he was about to leave for the south, he gave his direction in the catalogue to the house of his old friend and master. In March, 1777, he set out alone, and, as he tells us, travelled from Lyons to Genoa, from Genoa to Rome, without speaking a word of the language. With his incentives to work, we cannot doubt that he made good use of his time. He spent three years in Italy, visiting the cities distinguished as the seats of Art, but passing the greater part of the time at Rome. Following the teaching of Reynolds, he studied Michael Angelo, Raphael, and especially Titian. His powers were recognized by his election into the Academies of Florence, Cortona, and Rome, and with this prestige he returned homeward, studying the great Dutch and Flemish collections in his way, and arrived in London in May, 1780. Here he found his friend Reynolds still in full practice, with Romney for his rival in portraiture, and West, Barry, Copley, and Fuseli, to whom was soon added Opie, contending for the mastery in historic subjects.

Northcote's first resource on his return was portraiture. He visited his native county, where his reputation or his connexions attracted some sitters, and finally settled in London. In 1781 we find him at No. 2, Old Bond Street, and contributing two portraits of "Naval Officers" to the Royal Academy. At that time few sitters liked to have their names in the catalogue, so that we are fain to be content with "Portrait of a Lady," or "Portrait of a Gentleman;" "A Youth," "A Naval Officer," or "A Nobleman," although but few of the latter for many years troubled Northcote with their patronage.

In 1783, for the first time, he exhibited subject-pictures, homely and not of a very elevated class, such as "Beggars and Dancing Dogs," "Hobnelia, from Gay's Shepherd's Week," and "The Village Doctress." This latter work was engraved for Boydell, and we are told it had a considerable sale. The following year he exhibited a work of more pretension, "Captain Englefield and Eleven of his Crew saving themselves from the Wreck of the Centaur." Still, however, he clung to the domestic line, in which he had had some success: milk-and-water illustrations of the lesser moralities, "A Visit to Grandmamma," "Charity," "The Fruit Girl," &c. They do not afford much promise. With some character, and in his females some beauty, there was an absence of grace and taste; a pervading commonness, the drawing stiff, the figures without a sense of motion; yet they were probably suited to the prevailing taste, and when engraved through the enterprise of Boydell, found many purchasers, and assisted to spread the artist's name, if not his reputation. Meanwhile he had many sitters, and was making a little harvest in portraiture.

Northcote was ambitious—his aim was, from the first, historic Art; but it seems at least doubtful whether he would have reached his ideal goal, had he not been opportunely favoured by fortune. He probably was trammelled by necessity, and in painting for a livelihood must paint what he found a market for. This was portraits, and the small notions of domestic life which had, by the engraver's means, gained a large public. He tells us that of his "Visit to Grandmamma," very large numbers were sold, and that there were no less than five different impressions of it done in Paris. He seemed

settling down into this class of Art, in which he met with encouragement, when Alderman Boydell broached his great scheme of the Shakspeare Gallery. Here was the opportunity Northcote wanted. He engaged earnestly in the work, and finding a higher impulse with the higher aim, he was stimulated to excel. Taking them in the order of exhibition, his first truly historic work was in 1786. "King Edward V., and his brother Richard Duke of York, murdered in the Tower by order of Richard III." (From Shakspeare's *Richard III.* Act iv. scene 3.) "The gentle babes girdling one another within their infant alabaster arms," fast asleep, form the foreground of the picture, while over them the two hired ruffians are about to place the bolster with which tradition tells this ruthless deed was perpetrated. The picture is striking from its contrast of innocence and savagery, and the rude vigour with which the tale is told. The subject is known, and appeals to all, and we shudder at the deed to be done. But our emotions are far different when we contrast it with the refined work of Delaroche, the great French painter, who, taking his text rather from the historian than the dramatist, paints the two startled boys, not babes, disturbed and frightened by the approaching footsteps of their murderers, the younger clinging to his elder brother; and suggests to the mind, with infinite skill and subtle accessories, images and sympathies which Northcote's matter-of-fact treatment fails entirely to arouse. In his picture the children are truly babes of six or seven years old; the Duke of York having far more the appearance of a girl than of a boy. The painter had not yet got quite clear of pretty and domestic art, and the children (like Sir Joshua's "Infant Samuel")

seem rather the petted darlings of the day than the sad youths who had wept together, shut from mother and sister within a prison's walls. The painter seems to have learnt his error as to the age of the princes, for in the subsequent picture of "The Burial," the bodies that are being let down into the hole at the stair-foot are full ten years older than those who were slain. Judging from the engraving, there is far too strong an expression of hate in the armed ruffian, who is about to blot out the life of the princes, as though they were some personal enemies or disgusting reptiles, while no doubt he was only fulfilling his mission for mere gold or gain.

The work, however, must have been successful in the eyes of his brother artists, since we find that in 1787 Northcote is entered in the Royal Academy catalogue as R.A. elect. He must, therefore, have been chosen an Associate in November, 1786, and an Academician in February, 1787. He justified the choice of the members by exhibiting his great work of the death of Wat Tyler, which is thus described in the catalogue:—"Sir W. Walworth, Mayor of London, A.D. 1381, in the presence of Richard II., then fifteen years old, kills Wat Tyler, at the head of the insurgents, who are appeased by the heroic speech of the King." This picture now belongs to the Corporation of London, and is hung in the Guildhall; but is so high and in so dark a place that it is difficult to speak of it with any certainty. It is a picture of much merit, though, as is not unfrequent in his works, it is built on the composition of another. In this case, the motive has been one of the "Conversions of St. Paul" by Rubens, in which a rearing horse throwing his smitten rider is recalled to us by that of "Wat Tyler,"

while the horse of his assailant, also rearing, is like the horse of Rubens' standard-bearer. Northcote's King looking at his fallen enemy, and appealing to his angry subjects, is vigorous, and there is a sense of motion and action in the whole composition. The arrangement of light and dark (borrowed in some degree from the work of Rubens) is also clever; the full blaze of light being concentrated on the principal group, and enlarged by the two white horses, while the young King comes dark off this group, and the strongest clash of light and dark is made by his head and dark dress. The sudden impulse of the young King, by which he turns aside the wrath of the rebellious people on the loss of their leader, is well given.

In the year that Northcote exhibited this picture Opie exhibited his large, and, in many respects, most important picture of "The Assassination of David Rizzio." There are some curious coincidences relating to these works of the two painters. Northcote, as we have just said, had this year attained the full honours of the R.A., obtaining both steps within a year. The same had been the case with Opie, who steps at once from plain John Opie, of last year's catalogue, to John Opie, R.A., in this. The two pictures were painted, no doubt, in rivalry for these honours, exhibited in the same exhibition, and have found a final resting-place together. They both belong to the same great Corporation, and hang in the same room of their Guildhall in London.

Northcote, with his usual candour and openness, gives us a history, as related by a friend, of his own feelings on visiting Opie's study while at work on this picture, which he was invited to see when it was in a

very forward state. "When I returned to my painting-room," said Northcote, "I took up my palette and pencils with an inveterate determination to do something that should raise me a name; but my inspiration was only a momentary dream. The ghost of that picture stood between me and my blank canvas." (It would seem he was not so forward as his competitor.) "I could see nothing but the murderers of Rizzio. I felt I could have rejoiced if they had seized the painter and murdered him instead. Yes, I could! This dwelt upon my fancy until I laughed at the conceit; for, thought I, then there had been a meddling fiddler and a *rival* painter despatched at the same expense; and if all the fiddlers and painters were smothered, for aught I know, they might well be spared. I dreamed of the picture whilst wide awake, and I dreamed of the picture when fast asleep; how could I help it? There was a passage in the composition wherein the torches—for the scene was represented, as 'ee may remember, by torchlight, and it was the finest trait of effect that ever proceeded from mortal hand. I still dwelt upon it in my mind's eye in sheer despair. To attempt anything so original, so gloriously fine, I might as well have set about creating another world. I should have died but for a fortuitous circumstance." This circumstance was that the work so tormented him that he was obliged again to go and have another look. "I called again to see the hated *picter*." "Well, my dear friend, and how did you feel?" "How did I feel? Gude God! I would not have had Opie know what was passing in my mind for all the world; no, not even to have been the author of the *picter*. Judge, if 'ee can, what I felt! Why,

some wretch, some demon, had persuaded him to alter the whole structure of the piece. He had adopted the fatal advice, had destroyed the glory of the Art, and ruined—yes, to my solace—irrecoverably ruined the piece."

Such is the strong language in which he loved to indulge, and from which the world judges him as a spiteful and malevolent creature; but to us it appears that he merely set down strongly the feelings that came into his mind, which he would have been prompt to repress and root out if they had had any possible fruition. Observe, he expresses as much anger with the "wretches" who prompted the alteration, as satisfaction that the picture was now a less formidable rival to his own. After all, it may well be doubted if the picture were materially altered, or if it were not that the first vivid impression it had made on him had passed away when he saw it for the second time; a view which is entirely borne out by a careful examination of Opie's picture. Northcote says above, "the picture was represented by torchlight," and there is certainly a huge flaming torch in the picture; but the whole composition is lighted, and that with the most forcible light and dark, from the very opposite side to that at which the conspirators enter. They bear the single torch, and would have borne the *torches* which gave "the finest trait of effect that ever came from mortal hand" had not the work been altered; but no painter, looking at the work as it now stands, will say that the light has been totally changed. The dark, very dark shadows from the heads and figures are thrown towards the torch, towards the entering conspirators; a change could not

have been partial, it must have affected the whole composition. The shadows, as the picture now is, are not in the smallest degree reflected into by the torch, no warmth from which enriches their blackness or the cold white of the principal light. It is true there are many anomalies in the light and shade; but if the picture were ever lighted from the right instead of from the left, Opie must have thrown aside the old canvas, and begun again on a new one.

To revert to Northcote's own labours. In the following years he only occasionally exhibited at the Royal Academy, and mostly portraits. He was diligently at work for Boydell's Gallery, for which he painted in all nine pictures; the second being the "Meeting of the Young Princes." (*Richard III.* Act. iii. scene 1.) The popularity of the first picture led Northcote to return to it, and we have the first part of the same sad drama. The group of the two young Princes is happy and well conceived, but the rest of the picture has a made-up appearance, the figures wanting purpose and character. Northcote possibly felt this, for he afterwards painted a repetition picture on an upright, instead of a longitudinal canvas, and by this means got rid of several figures not necessary to his story, giving at the same time greater simplicity to his whole composition, and more graceful action to the two young Princes.

The faults of Northcote in these pictures are equally the faults of the other artists of his day. The first thing that strikes us is the want of proper consideration of his subject. We are told by one of his contemporaries, that of studies prior to commencing his pictures he made few or none—that the scheme of his work was little considered

ere he began on his canvas. This he may have learnt from Reynolds, whose habit, we know from many incidents, it also was. Hence in some works, figures have no ground plane on which they can stand, in others the space is empty, or unmeaning figures have been added unnecessarily to fill up the canvas. Character he studied but little, and seems to have given as little attention to obtaining suitable models for his work, the same head doing service on many figures in the same picture; nor does the work ever carry us back into the period it represents. The light and shade is generally extremely conventional and often untrue; thus in the "Wat Tyler," although the scene is in out-of-door daylight, the shadows are dark and with no reflections, indeed as they would be in the studio. To show that he could paint flesh, he gives us too many bare arms and legs in his costume-pictures; thus one of the figures lowering the young Princes into their untimely grave, has his head, body, and upper limbs in full armour, while his legs are bare and his feet completely naked. This want of due consideration before commencing the work, also causes much of the wretched *executive* of the pictures of the time. Instead of that careful preparation of the ground—that washing and minute grinding of each separate pigment under the eye of the master—that attention to dead colouring, with a view to second colouring and glazing, to the purity and fitness of the vehicle, and its complete admixture with the whole of the pigments of the palette, which was not only a tradition of the studios of the old masters, but a faith handed down from each to his successors, resulting in a practice which gave even bad pictures of their schools a preciousness of

workmanship and translucent beauty. The artists after Reynolds were like flies in a honey-pot, entangled with viscid and sticky paint, plastering it on to the canvas to endeavour to reach at once what was before them; some portions of the pigment as it came from the bladder, some fluent with an overdose of magylph or asphaltum; losing their ground, and careless of renewing it, painting in and painting out with the most perfect indifference, the result being that such pictures have perished almost in the painting, and are now sad wrecks indeed—or if otherwise, have none of the qualities described above, which are to be found even in the poorest pictures of a past age. Frequent instances of the faulty indifference to processes of painting have been given in our work, and we feel that they cannot be too often repeated if the works of our day are to remain to show posterity the talent of their predecessors, instead of needing an apology almost before leaving the easel.

For Boydell, Northcote painted "Romeo and Juliet," in 1792, and then in 1793, "The Death of Mortimer." In 1795 he painted for the same publisher, "The Burial of the Young Princes in the Tower," following out his first success. The subject mainly rests on the painter's own invention, for Shakspeare only tells us—

> "The chaplain of the Tower hath buried them,
> But where, to say the truth, I do not know."

The composition and general treatment is borrowed from the well-known picture of "The Entombment," by Caravaggio, and carries with it the appearance of imitative inspiration, rather than of true inventive genius;

nevertheless, it is one of the most impressive of the series, and certainly does not justify the criticism that four muscular men are employed to lower two little bodies down three or four steps, since only two are so employed; and as the children are now more properly shown as thirteen and fifteen years of age, there is sufficient weight to make it a work of difficulty to lower them down the crooked turret-stair into the hands uplifted to receive and place them in their narrow resting-place. Smith, in his life of Nollekens, tells us that when Northcote was working on this picture, Fuseli objected to the pair of hands "raised to receive the victims." "You should not," said the critic, "have the fellow's hands so employed. He ought to be digging the hole for them; only think how awfully grand it would have been had you made him with a pickaxe—dump, dump, dump!" Upon which, Northcote, who was fully aware of his man, requested to know in what way he would paint the sound of dump, dump, dump! "King Edward IV. and his Queen," and "Rutland and his Tutor," followed, and then "Prince Arthur and Hubert," the series being completed by "King Richard II. and Bolingbroke." These pictures may be presumed to represent Northcote's art at its best period. Painted for a gallery, and with a view to their dissemination by engraving, there was every inducement for the painter to do his best. They are conceived in a large and vigorous manner, and though without much refinement in any quality of Art, they yet give Northcote rank with the men who were his contemporaries and competitors in historic Art. If not equal to those contributed

by Reynolds in colour, they certainly are not inferior in conception and composition, and if we may generally trace these qualities to some earlier work, it is to be remembered that this habit of constructing upon previous foundations was not without precedents by the greatest masters, and was even inculcated by his own.

It is curious, in looking over the series of pictures published by Boydell, to note, not the inaccuracies, so much as the glaring inconsistencies of costume which pervade them all. Thus, one would think that no painter could have made such an egregious mistake as to dress Hubert in the early part of the thirteenth century, Plantagenet in the beginning of the fifteenth century, and Richard III. towards its end, all in the same costume, and that dress to consist of trunk-hose of the fashion of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Nor does it seem more consistent that Prince Arthur, pleading with Hubert, in 1210, should have on the same dress worn by Edward V. and the Duke of York, in 1480, and this in the same series of pictures. Yet such is a specimen of the negligence and inconsistency of Northcote. Nor does he scruple to use the same armour in Wat Tyler that we find on the murderer of the young Princes in the Tower—a suit made up of a head-piece of the time of the Commonwealth, and plate-armour of James and Charles. Perhaps, however, the crowning absurdity, as far as Northcote is concerned, is seen in the picture he presented to the Academy on his election, "Jael and Sisera," a clever work had it had another name. Sisera, the captain of the hosts of Jabin, king of Canaan, is stretched on a feather-bed in front of the picture, clad in the well-known suit of mail of the time

of the Commonwealth; and might well have been taken for Cromwell, stolen in upon by some Royalist damsel with nail and hammer, except that her dress is that of the painter's model, if he used one, being but little different from that of a maid-servant of his own time. It is told that when this picture was sent home to the Academy, Northcote was looking at it in the library, and, turning round, saw young Westall smiling. "Well, young man," said Northcote, "what do 'ee smile at?" Westall, who was searching for such information in costume as the library afforded—and that was not much—was sufficiently enlightened to see the gross anachronism, and owned that he smiled because Sisera was painted in armour of the time of Charles I. "Humph!" said Northcote, a little disconcerted, "and what does he look like, sir?" "Like a soldier," said Westall. "Well, that's true," said the elder painter; "and that is what I meant him for."

These may seem tolerably absurd specimens, but they may be supplemented by others equally startling. In fact, as the landscape painters of those days enjoyed a painter's tree, that flourished in all landscapes and for all foliage, so the figure painters seemed to have had a costume equally applicable to all persons, all periods, and all countries; the nobles of Bohemia being dressed in the trunks already described, and armed like the men of Britain with the patched armour of the kingdom and the commonwealth. Another peculiarity is that in the hands of some of the Shakspeare illustrators, the armour fits like the most pliant leather, and bends where there are no joints, to suit the artist's drawing; while in others, as in Opie's "Winter's Tale," it is so

extra rigid that the figure looks as if motion were impossible. In some of the pictures it is evident that the painter (as Lord Thurlow said of Romney) could never have read the passage he has illustrated. Hoppner, in his picture of the scene in Cymbeline, where Pisanio gives to Imogen the letter from his master commanding her death, has dressed the British lady of the Roman period in a white nondescript evening robe of his own day, with bare head, bare neck, and thin white shoes; not noting that she has ridden many miles to reach the lonely region (a park-like scene, by the way,) where the dark deed is to be done, nor heeding that before leaving her father's court she had given her command—

> "Provide me instantly
> A riding suit no costlier than would fit
> A franklin's housewife,"

or her chiding, ere Pisanio gives the letter, at her foot-sore journey since she left her horse—

> "Thou told'st me, when we came from horse, the place
> Was near at hand."

Pisanio himself, bare-headed and bare-armed, is not a trusty guide and servant, but much akin to the stage villain of the theatres south of the Thames. The weak literality of some of the painters is absolutely amusing. Thus in Graham's "Othello and Desdemona," the Venetian lady lies recumbent on a *four-post-bed;* and Othello—a negro foot-boy in a fantastic hat and feather, almost a repetition of the grinning negro in Hogarth's "Marriage à la Mode"—comes from behind the curtain, knife in hand, to stab one of the maids with whom he has fallen in love.

We must recollect, however, that paintings, up to

this time, abounded in such anachronisms, and that Rubens, in some sense the father of our school, was guilty of equally flagrant absurdities. Nor had there been any attention given at the theatre to proprieties of scenery or costume, while works of reference or authority on such matters were rare, and the opportunity of consulting them very limited. After all, there may be question how far the effort after exact costume is to be carried, since it may be made to cramp and confine the genius of the artist, and lead him to sacrifice the highest qualities of his art, to become a mere "property man." No doubt it greatly depends on the nature of the subject, and the implied intention of the work. When Reynolds paints three ladies in a semi-exact costume of his own time as the Graces sacrificing to Hymen, and weaving wreaths of roses round a classic term, we accept it with pleasure, as we do the royal shepherds and shepherdesses in *Watteau's Pastorals,* as a pleasing masque or fancy tableau; but we can far less tolerate history dressed in the false millinery of Peters or Tresham. Again, in the noble idylls of Michael Angelo, we are satisfied with portions of dress that fit as though they were the skin without folds, and serve to remove the sense of nudity in ideal beings. But the same treatment is more questionable in Fuseli or Westall, when dealing with the nearer realities of Macbeth or Hotspur.

This digression on the costume of the series of which the works of Northcote form a part, has led us away from the subject of his pictures; those in the Boydell Gallery are not very varied; he was fond of painting children, and having made a hit in "The Murder of the

Two Young Princes in the Tower," he followed it up with two pictures of their meeting, and a picture of their burial. His principal figure in "Rutland and his Tutor" is a child, and he has repeated the child in the same action in his "Hubert and Arthur," which is one of the most pleasing and popular of his works. It is perhaps obnoxious to Fuseli's criticism, who remarked that "the painter had taken the wrong moment, for whoever looks at that hesitating Hubert must see that the boy is safe, the danger past, and the interest gone. He should have chosen the moment when Hubert stamps with his foot, and cries — Come forth, do as I bid you. The two ruffians rushing in with red-hot irons, the scene would have been such as it ought to be—terrible;" but Northcote, while he wished to suggest the terrors, wisely considered such a subject as too painful, and gave us instead the relenting Hubert.

The nine pictures we have described are in Northcote's highest style. Painted for a gallery, he was quite at liberty to treat them the size of life, and in a large, simple manner without those details in which he certainly did not excel. They are vigorous, though without much originality; their want of drawing and character, and their other faults we have already pointed out, but we must allow Northcote to take equal rank with the eminent men who were his contemporaries, and engaged with him in these illustrations of our national poet. Notwithstanding Fuseli's remark, we think that in his choice of subjects, he has sufficiently adopted painful and terrible incidents, since with all Shakspeare to choose from, six of the nine illustrations are scenes of death and murder; perhaps this remark may have

reached Northcote, and a paper by him in the *Artist* in 1807, is intended as a justification. In this paper, after asserting that the mission of genius is not so much to give pleasure, as to improve by opening the mind to receive impressions of the highest order, and aiding it to nourish the highest virtues, he says:—"In this style must be classed, in a greater or less degree, all those works of art which are intended to move the mind with terror and with pity, subjects which we too commonly find rejected with disgust. This refinement upon delicacy itself, this extreme tenderness of sensibility, which is unable, even in a picture, to survey an object of terror, has been one of the greatest hindrances to the advancement of modern art in England, notwithstanding that scenes of this description, when executed by foreign masters, are received with open arms into collections the most select, and viewed with unbounded admiration."

Northcote's pencil in these days was tolerably prolific; while engaged on the Boydell pictures he found time to attempt another series, in which the artist was to invent the story as well as to paint it. The subjects are of a lower class than those we have described, but in addition to his pecuniary interest he intended them to aid the cause of morality. He painted ten pictures to contrast the progress of the diligent and the dissipated, by the example, as he describes, "of two female servants who are supposed to live in the house of a young unmarried man of fortune. One acts uniformly from motives of prudence, delicacy, and virtue; the other is careless, dissipated, and inclined to immoral gratifications." As we have but faint recollections of the pictures, the treatment of them is described from the prints.

They were published by Gaugain, in 1796. It is evident that they were intended for a wide circulation, and that Northcote looked to the foreign customers he had already secured, since the quotations to each print from the Book of Proverbs are given both in French and English. Cunningham says the idea was taken, of course, from Richardson's *Pamela;* but it is clear that it was derived from Hogarth, and intended as a female pendant to his "Idle and Industrious Prentice," to which the scenes and denouement bear a direct relation. But however successful the work may have proved at the time, his rivalry with Hogarth is anything but successful. Northcote had but little appreciation of character and humour, but little imitative faculty, and none of those minor graces of the art that are so prominent in the great moral painter of our school.

Starting with two distinct characters—"The Diligent Servant and the Dissipated"—he has been able to preserve the individuality of the former throughout, from the inexpressive equability of goodness; and although he has in general but little sense of the beautiful, has been tolerably successful in giving the modest sweetness so requisite to the character. But the Idle Girl of the first scene is certainly not the coarse romp of the second, the wanton of the advanced tableau, or the dying wretch of the final scene; the personality, so essential to the story, is wholly lost. Moreover, the story is too grossly and nakedly told, partly because vice looks more disgusting in the female than in the male sex, and partly because there is a diagrammatic plainness about the incidents, instead of that covert exposure of vice and wickedness which makes us despise them without their shocking our

good taste. This has been well felt by Hogarth in his "Marriage à la Mode." Northcote tells us that "the series of designs were constructed for the entertainment of young minds easily susceptible of impressions, not fixed by principles, and, therefore, following the current of fancy, to whom the familiar objects which it presents may be productive of greater good than the solemnities of more stately examples," but we doubt if young female minds ought to be familiar with the stolen visits of the vicious, or the drunken orgies of the night-cellar, or whether these with their nakedly and coarsely told incidents, are balanced by the milk-and-water career and improbable denouement of the life of the virtuous. As to the invention of the story, the incidents are most commonplace, and sometimes even ridiculous (as in the second subject, where the housekeeper is peeping through the keyhole of a wide-open door), while some of the few good points are adapted from his great predecessor. Where an attempt is made at character it results in gross caricature, as in the monstrous Moll Flagon, who is nursing the dying servant, and to whom, though drunk and fast asleep, the diligent maid is giving money, rather than being helpful to her dying companion or her neglected babe. In execution and in their pictorial qualities, these works sadly fail in contrast with Hogarth's; the accessories and backgrounds are badly introduced, and evidently very meanly painted; the draperies are tame and conventional; and the work has fully the impress of its object, that of serving for the basis of a set of poor prints, for widely-extended sale.

Northcote was successful as a painter of animals, and introduced them skilfully into his pictures. His

"Richard," and "Bolingbroke," and "Wat Tyler," are good examples of this, though the animals are rather too melodramatic; a fault also in his "Angel opposing Balaam," painted for Macklin's Bible. Of this picture, Fuseli said, bearing testimony to the delineation of the animal:—"Northcote, you are an angel at an ass; but an ass at an angel;" and truly his angel is a fine broad-shouldered corporeal reality. He painted also some subjects of animals; among them his "Dog and Heron," "Tiger and Crocodile," and "Vulture and Snake," which gained much notice, and several of these subjects were finely engraved in mezzotint by S. W. Reynolds. His fondness for painting animals seems to have been the inducement to commence his *Fables*, in which they are conspicuously introduced. The first series was published in 1828—the second after his death, and the editor tells us that Northcote designed them by collecting large numbers of the prints of animals, and then cutting them out, he arranged his composition, and pasting them down on a sheet of paper, Mr. Harvey was, from the design in this state, enabled to complete it on the wood. We are not disposed to credit this; Northcote's power of drawing animals, and the designs themselves, are entirely opposed to such a process, though it is unquestionable that the fables owe much to the elegant manner in which they are produced on the wood by Mr. Harvey, as well as to the tasteful vignettes, both designed and engraved by him, with which the moral of each fable is illustrated.

Admitted at the commencement of his career to the home and intimacy of Reynolds, Northcote became at its latter end the depository of the Art-lore of nearly two

generations; and, without any pretensions to authorship on the score of education, a writer on Art. But like his great master, his writings have been so largely attributed to the assistance of others, that their true merits have, we think unjustly, been denied to him. He was unquestionably a man of marked natural abilities—observant in all that related to his art—reflective by habit—and competent to express his ideas clearly, whether orally or with his pen. His first attempts were printed in *The Artist*, a periodical commenced in 1807, of which Mr. Prince Hoare was the editor, and are very creditable to him both in thought and style. He says of these papers—and it seems confirmatory of the opinion that they are exclusively his own:—"Mr. Prince Hoare taxed me the hardest in what I wrote for *The Artist*. He pointed out where I was wrong, and sent it back for me to correct." The texts he took were on originality in painting, proving that he who follows must be behind—that imitation never leads to excellence; on the independency of painting; on poetry—asserting that the painter and the poet are alike the pupils of Nature, and only rival imitators of her; that neither should submit to the dominion of the other, both being equals; a theme which he continued in a third paper—on the imitation of the stage in painting, warning the student of the inherent defects and mannerism which result from such study, and pointing as an example to the French school.

With some other papers of less importance, he also contributed *The History of a Slighted Beauty*, under which name he allegorically describes the birth of the Fine Arts, their progress through Europe, and arrival

in this country; an ingenious conceit very well and amusingly written, and extending into three numbers of *The Artist*. In 1813, Northcote published his *Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds*. He says in his preface, "It is my fixed opinion that if ever there should appear in the world a memoir of an artist well given, it will be the production of an artist;" a remark which to a great extent is borne out by his own work, for its merits are precisely those which his professional knowledge of art has given to it. His *Fables* (original and selected) were partly written by himself, his own being distinguished by his initials, which, we believe, are confined to the prose fables. Though without claim to much originality, they are tersely and well written. They have been attributed to his friend Hazlitt; yet Hazlitt himself says he recommended Northcote not to give up to his publisher, who wished to keep them, the manuscripts of his fables, "as there were several slips of the pen, and slovenliness of style (for which he did not think him at all accountable, since an artist wrote with his left hand and painted with his right); and he did not see why these accidental inadvertences, arising from diffidence and want of practice, should be as it were enshrined and brought against him"—a recommendation hardly consistent with Hazlitt's having had anything to do with the work; though it is probable he may have assisted largely in Northcote's last work, the *Life of Titian*, published in 1830.

It was Northcote's habit to take an early walk, then breakfast, and afterwards enter his studio. He was distinguished for his conversational powers; and it was his practice to admit his visitors to his painting-room,

so that about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, unless he had a sitter, a sort of levée commenced. It seldom happened that he remained long alone—one succeeded another, occasionally three or four at a time; and he talked over his work till his dinner-hour, freely discussing any subject which arose with great sagacity, acuteness, and information, always maintaining his opinions. In the latter part of his life Hazlitt was a frequent visitor; and in 1826 he commenced the publication of Northcote's conversations, under the name of "Boswell Redivivus," in the *New Monthly Magazine*. It is said that Northcote assented to this publication, and enjoyed the brief reputation it gave him; but persons being named, and much offence given even to his tried friends, he at once disclaimed the authenticity of such statements, and without mercy angrily anathematized Hazlitt, though he did not relinquish his society. The conversations were afterwards printed in a collected form, without preface or explanation; and while they impress us highly with Northcote's great abilities as a talker, they do not in this shape contain anything personally offensive, repugnant to our institutions, or which savours of irreverence of sacred things—though all these have been laid to his charge—or anything inconsistent with the possession of all the virtues.

We learn from all accounts of him that Northcote had the character of independent self-assertion, and that he did not abstain from cynical remarks, and he says himself, "I am sometimes thought cold and cynical myself, but I hope it is not from any overweening opinion of myself." Hazlitt tells—"He blamed himself often for uttering what he thought harsh things; and

on mentioning this to his friend Kemble, and saying that it sometimes kept him from sleep after he had been out in company, Kemble replied, 'Oh, you need not trouble yourself much about them, others never think of them afterwards,'" which, if consolatory, was surely not flattering. Northcote shows also his impatience of contradiction when he alleges, "It will never do to take things literally that are uttered in a moment of irritation. You do not express your own opinion, but one as opposite as possible to that of the person who has provoked you. You get as far from a person you have taken a pique against as you can, just as you turn off the pavement to get out of the way of a chimney-sweeper; but it is not to be supposed you prefer walking in the mud for all that. I have often been ashamed myself of speeches I have made in that way, which have been repeated to me as good things, when all I meant was, that I would say anything sooner than agree to the nonsense or affectation I heard. You then set yourself against what you think a wrong bias in another, and are not like a wall but a buttress—as far from the right line as your antagonist, and the more absurd he is the more so do you become."

We can well understand this, and take it as the key to some of Northcote's eccentric contradictions. An artist, then young, who afterwards became a member of the Royal Academy, tells a story very much to the point. He relates that one day calling on Northcote, he found him mounted on a pile of boxes, working away with the zeal of a boy at one of his equestrian portraits of George IV., and that his first inquiry of his visitor was whether he had been at the exhibition, and

what he thought of the year's collection? To this interrogatory the young artist replied that he thought Lawrence had in the exhibition one of the most *perfect* pictures in the world. "A *perfect* picture, do'ee say, and from the hands of Lāarence! A perfect picture! Why, you talk like a fule! A *perfect* picture! Why, I've bin to Rome and seen Rāfale, and I never saw a *perfect* picture by him, and to talk of Lāarence doing a *perfect* picture—Good Lord! What nonsense! Lāarence doing anything perfect—why, there never was any perfect picture—at least I never *saw* one." The picture in question was a group of the children of Mr. Calmady, better known under the title of "Nature," through the medium of the fine line-engraving by Mr. Doo, R.A. In this case some asperity was added to the veteran painter's natural spirit of contradiction, from the fact that so soon as Sir Thomas Lawrence had firmly established himself in the favour of the fashionable world, the practice of most of the portrait painters of the time, many of whom were the scholars or imitators of Reynolds, declined; and Northcote, among the rest, no doubt experienced a diminution both of professional fame and income.

We add a personal description of Northcote, who is thus painted by Leslie, R.A., in 1821:—"It is the etiquette for a newly-elected member to call immediately on all the Academicians, and I did not omit paying my respects to Northcote among the rest, although I knew he was not on good terms with the Academy. I was shown upstairs into a large front room, filled with pictures, many of the larger ones resting against each other, and all of them dim with dust. I had not waited long when a door opened, which communicated with

his painting-room, and the old gentleman appeared; but did not advance beyond it. His diminutive figure was enveloped in a chintz dressing-gown, below which his trowsers, which looked as if made for a much taller man, hung in loose folds over an immense pair of shoes, into which his legs seemed to have shrunk down. His head was covered with a blue silk nightcap, and from under that and his projecting brows, his sharp black eyes peered at me with a whimsical expression of inquiry. There he stood, with his palette and brushes in one hand, and a mahl-stick twice as long as himself in the other; his attitude and look saying, for he did not speak, 'What do you want?'"

From what is known of the character of Northcote we are far from deeming him the heartless cynic which he has been represented. He was benevolent to those who applied to him for assistance, and courteous to the young artist who sought his advice. He was temperate and just, and his prudence enabled him to secure independence. His biographer, Cunningham, in drawing a character, has been hard upon him, and has in more than one instance erroneously told his own stories to his disadvantage. For example, quoting from Hazlitt, he says: "When on his way to Devonport, Opie parted with him where the road branches off for Cornwall, and he said to those on the coach with him, 'That is Opie the painter.' 'Is it indeed?' they all cried, and upbraided Northcote for not informing them sooner. Upon this he contrived, by way of experiment, to try the influence of his own name, but his fame had not reached those enlightened 'outsides,' and the painter confessed he felt mortified." But the story, on the very authority

quoted by Cunningham, is widely different. It did not refer to enlightened outsides, but to one young man who had conversed with the two painters; and Northcote distinctly says, "I did not tell him who *I* was, to see if *my* name would electrify him in the same manner." Northcote never married. His long life was entirely devoted to the enthusiastic pursuit of his profession, and was quietly terminated the 13th July, 1831, in his eighty-sixth year.

James Opie, R.A. (never Oppy, as has been said), was in his art-relations the twin brother of Northcote, occupying the same place both in portrait and history. He was born at St. Agnes, near Truro, in May, 1761; the son and grandson of the village carpenter, respectable men, who intended that he should succeed to the family trade, but his genius led him in another course. He was early remarkable for the strength of his understanding and the readiness with which he acquired all that the village school could offer. At ten years of age he was not only able to solve many difficult problems of Euclid, but was thought capable of instructing others; and at twelve he set up an evening-school, where he taught scholars of twice his own age. He early showed an attachment to drawing, and gave evidences of his inclination, which his mother secretly encouraged. His father checked such attempts, since they led him aside from the trade he had chosen for him; but gradually the boy's strong inclination prevailed, and he was left to practise openly the pursuit he had secretly followed. He had already made sufficient progress to get some country employment in portrait painting, and had been commissioned by Lord Bateman to paint some rustic subjects, when he fell under the notice of Dr. Wolcot, known as

Peter Pindar, who was then trying to establish himself in practice at Truro. One writer says, the doctor found him at work in a saw-pit; another adds, that "he compassionately took him, as a lad, to clean knives, feed the dogs, &c., purposely to screen him from the beating his father would now and then give for chalking the saw-pit all over." A third speaks of the debt of gratitude which "Opie owed to Wolcot for his frank and friendly encouragement when he was a menial in his house in Cornwall, and for his anxious introduction of 'the Cornish Wonder' to the novelty gazers in London."

We do not credit any of these tales, or think it probable that a clever lad who had resisted the wishes of his family from his determination to follow Art, would on the dawnings of his success be induced to become a menial in the service of an adventurer like Wolcot, who had no doubt noticed and encouraged the abilities of Opie, and wished to make himself his patron, not entirely from disinterested motives. No two writers fix the same date for the arrival of Wolcot with Opie in the metropolis. Wolcot himself, perhaps not the most reliable authority, says: "At length I proposed to him to go first to Exeter and afterwards to London (this was in 1780), and having lost an income of 300*l.* or 400*l.* by the change of scene, entered into a written agreement, by which it was agreed we should share the joint profits in equal divisions. We actually did so for a year; but at the end of that time my pupil told me I might return to the country, as he could now do for himself." The doctor, then, was not without solid reasons for pushing the young painter into notice, and contrived that the advent of his "Wonder" should be well noised abroad.

Wolcot must have been prompt to take advantage of this partnership with Opie. We find from the above that Opie did not come to London until 1780, and that he dissolved the unsatisfactory connection within a year. Wolcot's trumpet must have been blown to announce his expected arrival, and had evidently made an impression on the painters, whatever it did on the public. Northcote was absent in Italy when Opie arrived in London; he returned in May, 1780, and, as Leslie relates, called on Reynolds immediately, who said to him, "Ah, my dear sir, you may go back; there is a wondrous Cornish man who is carrying all before him." "What is he like?" said Northcote, eagerly. "Like? why like Caravaggio and Velasquez in one." Poor Northcote was alarmed at the prospect of such a rival; but he thought it best to strike up a friendship with him at once, and friends they were, said Leslie, as long as Opie lived: such great friends, apparently, that Lonsdale, the painter, feared to announce Opie's death to Northcote, lest the shock should be too much for him. When he did tell him, however, Northcote said, "Well, well, it's a very sad event; but I must confess it takes a great stumbling-block out of my way, for I never could succeed where Opie did."

Notwithstanding this little touch of worldliness, and the fashion to represent the rivalry of the two men as extreme, we do not believe that it was any bar to their friendship, or exceeded that natural feeling which would exist between those advancing by the same path, where each must strive to be first. We do not find the least trace of bitterness in Amelia Opie's letters, where, if any existed, it would surely have found expression; but, on

the contrary, that Northcote, of whom she speaks "as this queer little being" and "the little man," was evidently on terms of familiar intimacy with her and her husband. If any such feelings had a momentary expression, as might be assumed from Northcote's words, it was surely not deep-seated. "You did not know Opie," said Northcote. "You would have admired him greatly. I do not speak of him as an artist, but as a man of sense and observation. He paid me the compliment of saying that we should have been the best friends in the world if we had not been rivals. I think he had more of this feeling than I had, perhaps because I had most vanity." It seems also entirely inconsistent with Northcote's outspoken nature to have written the eulogy which he published in *The Artist* on the death of Opie, had any jealous feelings rankled in his mind.

The public are taken by the marvellous and the wonderful, and Wolcot knew how to feed this appetite: Opie was at once puffed and talked into fashion.

> "The Cornish boy, in tin-mines bred,
> Whose native genius, like his diamonds, shone
> In secret, till chance gave him to the sun,"

had commenced portrait painting in the metropolis. His works showed a rude, vigorous power; and his door was surrounded by the carriages of his sitters. This did not, however, last long: wonders, if they never cease, rapidly succeed one another; and new claimants for fame, or the return of the public to its old favourites, left him, no longer a wonder, to prove by his real ability his claim to notice and reputation.

Meanwhile, the doctor and his *protégé* soon differed in opinion. Wolcot had no doubt a great sense of his

own importance, and had worked himself into the belief he had propagated that the painter was indebted to his discernment, rather than to his own merits, for the position he had won. Whatever may have been the compact between them at first, the sturdy and independent character of Opie could ill brook dictation in his art, so that the breach became wider as the painter not only became more self-dependent and acquainted with the world, but learnt that though a man may be written into temporary notoriety, he must eventually rely on his own merits for success. We can well believe that the sarcastic doctor was not an agreeable patron. After Opie had broken with him he took another painter under his protection. Richard M. Paye, an artist of much merit, unhappily fell under his *care* and tutelage, to be instructed in what he should, and what he should not, paint, and, it is said, to share the profits of his successful works with the doctor, as, for a time at least, the doctor shared the painter's residence. Eventually, Wolcot introduced a boy, his natural son, to serve the artist in the double capacity of model and footboy. The lad was loutish and stupid, and sat, no doubt appropriately, for a picture of "The Sulky Boy." For this his character suited the artist better than in his occupation as footboy; in which capacity the lad's stupidity led to Paye's frequent complaints to the doctor, and ended in a quarrel which terminated the connection.

Soon after Opie's arrival in London, he married his first wife, who was reputed to have possessed some property, but about whom little is known. The union was not a happy one, and was dissolved by the lady's misconduct in 1795. His second wife tells us that "passing

St. Giles's Church in company with a gentleman of avowedly sceptical opinions, Mr. Opie said, 'I was married in that church' (alluding to his first marriage); 'and I,' replied his companion, 'was christened there.' 'Indeed,' answered Opie. 'It seems they do not do their work well there, for it does not hold.'" But we trace in the recital of the act to dissolve this marriage, that it took place the 4th of December, 1782, at the parish church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, not St. Giles's, and that the lady's maiden name was Mary Bunn, of St. Botolph's, Aldgate; that they lived together for several years, until she eloped in 1795, with John Edwards, Esq.; and that after judgment had been obtained against him in the Court of King's Bench, and a divorce granted by the Consistory Court, the act, which recites there being no issue of the marriage, gives Opie the usual permission to marry again, with the ordinary provisions with regard to property, and bars all right to the said Mary Bunn.

After Wolcot and Opie dissolved their curious partnership, the doctor began a series of attacks on the members of the Academy, which he published as critiques on the exhibitions of 1782, 1783, 1785, and 1786, but it is to his credit that he abstained from attacking Opie, nay, on one occasion, when very severe on Fuseli, he adds in a note to his ode—"Mr. Fuseli should expect no lenity from the rod of criticism, after having himself uttered the following sarcasm upon a brother artist, Opie, at a time when he was in apparent friendship with that ingenious painter—'Dere is dat poo-re dogue Opee, de faelow cant paaynt notin but teeves and morederers, an wen de dogue paaynts a teef or a morederer, he lookes in de glaas.'"

Left to himself, Opie had for a time sufficient em-

ployment as a portrait painter, varied occasionally by single figures—pictures midway between subjects and portraiture. The first time his name appears as an exhibitor at the Royal Academy is in 1782; his contributions, "An Old Man's Head," and "An Old Woman." He was then living in Orange Court, Lincoln's Inn Fields, in the immediate neighbourhood of Reynolds's studio. In 1783, he exhibited two fancy subjects, "Age and Infancy," and a "Boy and Girl," together with three portraits; but as his connection increased, we find him in the pleasanter neighbourhood of Lincoln's Inn Fields, and in 1785 an exhibitor of six works, three of which are portraits, and three subject-pictures. In 1786 he sent seven pictures to the Royal Academy, one of them "James I. of Scotland Assassinated by Graham at the Instigation of his Uncle, the Duke of Athol," together with "A Sleeping Nymph," "Cupid Stealing a Kiss," and five portraits. These were followed in 1787, by "The Assassination of David Rizzio," which won the painter his election, not only as an associate, but in the following spring as a full member of the Royal Academy, as we have related in our account of Northcote.

This shows a rapid advance in the short space of five years, for one whose education in art must have been carried on apart from the companionship of artists, and with the very limited opportunities that so distant a county as Cornwall could in that age supply. It is true that his methods are rude, and his execution the most common and unsatisfactory possible; but the feeling of vigour and power they display makes us overlook many of their defects, and we tolerate his works when not brought under

too close inspection; but when weighed as to their real merits and defects, they are at times sadly wanting in many qualities. Let us examine, for instance, his "Old Man and Child," the picture he presented to the Academy on his election, as it is an illustration of many of his worst faults. An old man, whom we might mistake for a beggar from his coarse features, his rough weather-beaten look, and his uncombed grey hair, were it not that he is clad in a crimson mantle lined and bordered with ermine, hangs over a dying or sleeping child. There is a certain coarse vigour of expression in the contrast between age bending with sorrow over tender infancy, as there is also in the light and shade, but as the character is, such is the painting. The robe or mantle seems as if hung on a post, instead of on the shoulders of a human being, and has the appearance of having been for months in the wind and rain, so dirty and matted is the fur; while the arm that comes from beneath his silken mantle has the dirty sleeve and cuff of an old cloth coat. The child is in a garment of white linen, or what should have been white; as it is, it is a bundle of dirty brush marks, put on as it were with a pound brush full of colour, and giving the slightest possible indication of folds; thick alike in lights and darks, the same handling is used throughout, be it for linen, for flesh, or for background. The picture is not much cracked either in the lights or darks; but the asphaltum, with the strange perversity which characterizes that material, has taken instead to flowing, and stands in ridges round the figure; while the whole work is, as far as execution goes, of the most unmistakable commonness.

The murder of Rizzio is also an example of Opie's

coarse and slovenly execution; it is in a sad state of dilapidation from the painter's want of knowledge, or his carelessness and indifference to means and method; but it may be referred to as an example of Opie's power in the real qualities of art. It is a vigorous work, and shows how little he was disposed to shirk difficulties in his practice. The composition is rudely energetic, the figures in violent action. Rizzio, the principal figure, falling backwards out of the picture, smitten down by the sword of the ruthless Ruthven, is a strong example of a difficulty overcome, and so is the queen, rushing forward to interpose herself between the assassin and his victim, but restrained by the fierce grasp of Douglas: a group which perhaps suggested Fuseli's "Hamlet held back by Horatio from following his father's ghost." The light and dark of the picture is too pronounced, probably from the failure of the darks, which have become black, and this shows as a great defect, bringing lines into prominence which no doubt were more subdued when the picture left the painter's studio. Leslie, R.A., thought very highly of this work, and at his suggestion it was borrowed for the use of the students in the school of painting at the Royal Academy —surely a want of judgment on his part, as the execution is of the most untutored kind; and the picture is going rapidly to decay from the use of improper pigments and vehicles. It might, however, have been properly placed before the students, for the vigour and clearness with which the dramatic story is told, the appearance of reality which it suggests, and the original action of the principal figures. But as an example of painting, it is, like many other English

pictures of this time, worse than useless, the execution wholly without principle, and the effect sought, only produced by constant repetitions.

There can be little doubt of Opie's original powers, or of the innate force of his genius for art, if we reflect that he came to London in 1780, from a remote county, where he could have had little or no instruction, or have seen but few works of art; that he was then only nineteen years of age, dependent upon his own exertions for his support; yet in less than seven years he had overcome many of the difficulties of art, had painted "The Death of Rizzio," a work which, whatever its faults, is full of vigour and freshness, and compared with those of most of his contemporaries, has a marked individuality of its own; and that he had won his way to fame and been elected to the full honours of the artistic body corporate at the green age of twenty-five, and was engaged to co-operate in one of the most important works of the age, the Shakspeare Gallery. Cunningham calls him an inspired peasant; and Shee, writing in 1789, thus paints him:—"I have been introduced to Mr. Opie, who is in manners and appearance as great a clown and as stupid a looking fellow as ever I set my eyes on. Nothing but incontrovertible proof of the fact would force me to think him capable of anything above the sphere of a journeyman carpenter, so little, in this instance, has Nature proportioned exterior grace to inward worth. I intend calling upon him occasionally; for I know him to be a good painter, and notwithstanding appearances are so much against him, he is, I am told, a most sensible and learned man."

This description, however, though no doubt Shee's

honest impression of the man, differs totally from Opie's fine portrait painted by himself now in the Royal Academy, in which there is a look of self-dependence, of decision and intellect curiously agreeing with the square vigorous handling of the work, and far removed from clownish stupidity, or even from the inspiration of a mere peasant. Indeed, however obtained, his knowledge seems to have greatly impressed literary men well qualified to judge. Horne Tooke, who sat to Opie, said of him, "Mr. Opie crowds more wisdom into a few words than almost any man I ever knew, he speaks as it were in axioms, and what he observes is worthy to be remembered;" and Sir James Macintosh remarked, that "had Mr. Opie turned his mind to the study of philosophy, he would have been one of the first philosophers of the age," adding, "had he written on the subject, he would have thrown more light on the philosophy of his art, than any man living."

Soon after Opie's election to the Academy, he was engaged by Boydell to take part in his great series of Shakspeare Illustrations, for which he painted five pictures, namely: "Juliet on her Bed, surrounded by the Capulets," *Romeo and Juliet*, Act iv., scene 5; Scene from the *Winter's Tale*—"Antigonus sworn to destroy Perdita," Act ii., scene 3; "Talbot and the Countess of Auvergne," *Henry VI.*, Part i., Act ii., scene 3; "The Incantation Scene," *Henry VI.*, Part ii., Act i., scene 4; and "Timon with Phryne and Timandra," *Timon of Athens*, Act iv., scene 3. There is a marked advance as Opie progresses in these works; thus the first is an inferior picture to the "Rizzio," the composition is scattered and ill arranged, the story not well

told, the figures want individual character, and do not seem as if painted from the life. The draperies not only have no character of antiquity and are wholly incorrect, but they are arranged and thrown without taste, and look as if hung on a peg or a lay figure. This is particularly the case in the Lady Capulet, who forms almost the principal figure of the group. Each succeeding picture is an improvement, the "Timon" being in many respects the best. The rugged misanthrope is well contrasted with the two frail Athenian beauties; the story is simply and strongly told, and the costume, if without research, is without the striking inconsistencies and anachronisms of the other works.

As he advanced in the series, Opie became more and more simple in his compositions, his light and shade also is more concentrated, so as to give the strongest emphasis to his principal figure, but it is too artificial, and forced. In these days, when a certain degree of literal truth is indispensable, it is curious to note how careless the painters of the last age were, and how indifferent to truth when it suited them to disregard it. Thus in the "Incantation Scene," Mother Jourdain is lighted from the fire of the cauldron over which she hovers, yet there is a dark shadow under the chin, as if the face were lighted from above, and the hand and arm actually stretched over the fire, have the shade below, the light above them. Such instances might be indefinitely multiplied from the "Rizzio" and other works. Yet the pictures impress us with a sense of rude power and genius, and have a vigorous strength that contrasts finely with the feeble inanities of many of his contemporaries engaged on the same series.

When Boydell's work was ended, Opie had to recur to portraiture as his chief means of support, occasionally painting and exhibiting subject pictures. His sitters introduced him into society at Norwich, and on the occasion of an evening party he saw for the first time Miss Alderson, the daughter of a physician in that city, who afterwards became the second Mrs. Opie. Their meeting has been described by Miss Brightwell, her biographer, who tells us that Opie, being at a party where Miss Alderson was expected as one of the guests, she did not make her appearance until a late hour. At length the door was flung open, and the lady entered in a garb far different to that she assumed later in life. "She was dressed in a robe of blue, her neck and arms bare, and on her head a small bonnet, placed in a somewhat coquettish style, sideways, and surmounted by a plume of three white feathers. Her beautiful hair hung in rich waving tresses over her shoulders; her face kindling with pleasure at the sight of her old friends; and her whole appearance animated and glowing." Opie was at the time in conversation with the host who had been anxiously expecting her; and, suddenly interrupted it by the exclamation, "Who is that? who is she?" and hastily rising, pressed forward to be introduced. He was evidently smitten, charmed—as was characteristic of his impulsive nature—at the first sight. Mrs. Opie said of this meeting:—"Almost from my first arrival, Mr. Opie became my avowed lover." She vowed that his chances of success were but one in a thousand; but he persevered. He knew his own mind, and persuaded her at length that he had read her heart. So she went home again to Norwich, to think of the future and to

prepare for it. They were married in 1798, and his wife said that "he found it necessary to make himself popular as a portrait painter, and that in the productive and difficult branch of female portraiture." For this we should have thought his art, from its rude strength, particularly unfitted him; yet on examining the catalogues, we find that nearly half of his sitters were ladies. A group belonging to the Garrick Club, is a good specimen of his powers. It contains portraits of the leading actors of the time in the characters of *The Gamester*, the scene chosen being the death of Stukely. The figures are life-size; the females are ladylike, and have the air of some of Reynolds's portraits; but the head of Stukely himself is coarse and common. The head above him of a standing figure in the centre of the picture, has been inserted after the work was partly finished, either because the painter was unwilling to repeat a study made on a smaller canvas (a procedure often resorted to by Northcote), or to introduce the portrait of some succeeding celebrity of greater notoriety.

We find from his wife's memoirs of him that the first years of their married life were not without anxieties. She says that his "picture in the Exhibition of 1801 was universally admired, and was purchased; yet he saw himself at the end of that year and the beginning of the next, almost wholly without employment." . . . . "Gloomy and painful indeed," she adds, "were those three alarming months; and I consider them as the severest trial that I experienced during my married life." And she bears this affectionate testimony to his perseverance:—"His love of his profession was intense, and his unremitting industry in the pursuit of it, drew from

Mr. Northcote the observation, 'that while other artists painted to live, he lived to paint.' He was incessantly engaged in his painting-room during the hours of daylight, and no society, however pleasant, could long detain him from it." In 1806—we quote her words with pleasure—she notes, "that prosperity had reached them; and that Mr. Opie was rewarded for his perseverance and disappointments by success and fame." But he was stimulated to too high efforts, and we find from his letters, that "he laboured so intently the latter end of 1806, and the beginning of 1807, that he allowed his mind no rest, hardly indulging in the relaxation of a walk." A disease of the spinal marrow, affecting the brain, had commenced. He strove hard to finish his works for the Academy Exhibition; but delirium ensued, and in this state, the mind wandering upon his art, he gradually sank, and died 9th of April, 1807, in his forty-seventh year. He was buried with some pomp in St. Paul's.

In his last hours he was anxious to finish a picture for the Royal Academy, which was nearly ready, and his pupil Thomson, who afterwards became a member and the keeper of the Royal Academy, volunteered to work on it for Opie. Delirium had set in, but when the picture, in one of his lucid intervals, was brought for him to see, he was clear enough on the subject of art to say, "I think there is not colour enough in the background." Thomson was struck with the justice of the remark, and having added more colour, again brought it into the room. "It will do now," said the dying painter with a smile; "take it away; indeed, if you can't do it, nobody can." "And his countenance," says his wife, who relates the anecdote, "gave us the

consolation of knowing that his feelings were comfortable ones, and that he was conscious of neither our misery nor of his own situation."

Reynolds, as we have seen, said Opie's art was like Caravaggio and Velasquez. Dayes, no mean critic, thought it approximated to Rembrandt. All these three artists are distinguished by their power and breadth, qualities which Opie possessed. His colour, however, was deficient in purity; his lights are often heavy and cold; his execution was broad and spirited, but very coarse; his conception of his subject real and vigorous, full of action, but showing those defects which the neglect of early training render inevitable. He had great claims to merit as a portrait painter. His men are firm, bold, freely handled, and sometimes well coloured; but his women too often want refinement, are chalky in colour, and their beauty is destroyed by his want of execution. Northcote said that his conception was original, he saw nature forcibly and distinctly, his local colour was well represented, that he expressed truth powerfully, and with great breadth.

Opie also made himself known as a writer. His first work was the *Life of Reynolds* for Dr. Wolcot's edition of Pilkington. He next printed *A Letter on the Cultivation of the Fine Arts in England,* in which he recommended the formation of a National Gallery. He delivered four lectures on Art at the Royal Institution; and on his election of Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy, in 1805, he delivered four lectures: on "Design," "Invention," "Chiaroscuro," and "Colour." These four Lectures were published after his death, with a memoir by his widow, who enjoyed a high literary reputation.

Sir William Beechey, R.A., Knt., is the last painter of the time who merits notice in this chapter. He has not found a biographer; not even a memoir of him, that we are aware of, appears in print, and we are surprised to find that the recollections of an artist, who filled some space in his time, have passed away in little more than a generation. Dayes, who was an early contemporary of Beechey, tells of him, in his account of the painters who then flourished, that he was originally a house-painter and for many years struggled with fortune. In a brief notice of him, which, at the time of his death, appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, no mention is made of this, but he is stated to have been born at Burford, in Oxfordshire, December 12, 1753, and to have been articled to a conveyancer at Stow in Gloucestershire, but that being tired of the monotony of a provincial lawyer's office, he came to London and continued under his articles with a Mr. Owen of Tooke's Court. This is certainly explicit enough, but the two accounts are hardly consistent with each other. In London, Beechey became acquainted with some students of the Royal Academy; delighted by their pursuits and enamoured with art, he prevailed upon his master to release him from the law, and in 1772 he gained admission to the schools of the Academy, and thenceforth devoted himself to his new profession.

He commenced the practice of art as a portrait painter and met with some encouragement in London; and then, in 1781, an opening at Norwich induced him to try his fortune in that city, where he painted some conversation pieces of the character introduced by Hogarth, and tried his hand on one or two subject pictures. At the end of four or five years he returned and settled in the

metropolis, where he soon gained practice and celebrity. Dawe, in his *Life of George Morland* (1804), tells how Beechey was introduced to the notice of George III. The portrait of a nobleman, painted by him, being returned by the Hanging Committee of the Royal Academy, so incensed the peer, that he had the picture sent for to Buckingham Palace to be inspected by the King and the Royal Family, who all, in consequence, became sitters to the painter. This was the commencement of his fortunes. In 1793 he painted a whole-length portrait of the Queen, who appointed him her portrait painter, and the same year he was elected an associate of the Royal Academy. Increased commissions followed the royal patronage. Dawe says, "Beechey may justly be considered the only original portrait painter we have, all the rest being more or less the imitators of Sir Joshua." But we do not think that the large portrait group which he completed in 1798 would ever have been painted had not Reynolds preceded him.

This equestrian group of George III., with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, reviewing the 10th Hussars and the 3rd Dragoons, is now at Hampton Court (No. 166). Although a clever and somewhat showy group of portraits, it has little of real nature, but is full of painter's artifices. Thus the king's white horse forms the principal light and comes off the Prince of Wales's dark horse; the king's head and black cocked-hat is arranged against a convenient light cloud, while the head of Sir W. Fawcett, who is standing in front, comes off an equally convenient dark one; the light and shadow of all the heads is the light and shadow of the studio and not of the field, but this was common to most portrait

painters; the horses are too much of the rocking-horse character, made heroic by an addition of horse-hair on the manes and tails. As a whole, it has a look of dash with but little truth or originality. There are also two whole-lengths by him of the King and the Queen on the grand staircase at Buckingham Palace, which are very respectable works. Beechey's large group especially, attracted much attention, and the same year (1798) he was knighted, and gained his election as a Member of the Royal Academy.

As Beechey had gained his introduction to the Court by accident, so it happened to his pupil, Sharpe—known afterwards as "Bees-wing Sharpe," from a picture he had painted. Sharpe was so pertinacious in his request to be present at a sitting of royalty that at last Beechey consented, on the express stipulation that he should be quite silent, keep out of the way, and merely set, and from time to time hand him, a fresh palette. Under these conditions, he accompanied Sir William to the Palace. They had hardly reached the apartment where the sitting was to take place when the door was thrown open and the astonished pupil heard the cry of Sharp! —simply a warning to be on the *qui vive* for royalty. Nervously impulsive, he thought that he was called, and rushed forward, to hear from the domestics in the suite of rooms he traversed the same cry of "Sharp! Sharp!" This only increased his confusion, until, at length, in passing through one of the doors, he ran right into the arms of some one. "Hallo! hallo! what's this, what's this? Who are you?" were uttered in quick succession. "Who are you?" "Sharpe, your Majesty," said the young painter, who, though dreadfully alarmed, saw at

once that it was the King. "Sharpe, Sharpe," said the King; "what, son of the hautboy player of Norwich?" Now it so happened that the King had hit upon the right person, and when the youth acknowledged that Sharpe of Norwich was his father, the King at once was gracious. "Well, Sharpe," said he, "you had almost knocked royalty down, but it is well it is no worse. What brought you here?" Sharpe explained that he was Sir William's pupil, had come to aid him in the sitting, &c. The story amused the King as much as it annoyed Beechey, and the accident led to a commission to Sharpe to paint the Princess Amelia and others of the Royal Family.

Sharpe is said to have lost favour as oddly as he gained it. He became a great favourite with the pages, and one day exercised his skill in painting a pair of scissors hanging on a nail in their room. The King, on some occasion, coming into the pages' apartments, attempted to take the scissors off the nail, at which there was the faintest of titters, and, offended at the deception which had taken him in as well as others, he inquired who was the delinquent, and Sharpe, who was pointed out, fell as rapidly as he had risen in royal favour.

Unlike his contemporaries, Beechey was not led aside by attempts at history painting. If he possessed any such genius we see little traces of it, and fully employed in portraiture, he had probably neither the inclination nor the opportunity to attempt subject pictures. If he has left little for posterity, he was fortunate in his own day. He painted for the King the full-length portraits of all the Royal Family, and for the Prince of Wales the portraits of the princesses, his sisters. For the Queen, an exceptional work, he painted the entire decorations of a

room in the royal lodge at Frogmore. The chief persons of fashion and distinction in his day were his sitters. His colouring was pleasing. He excelled in his females and children; but his males wanted power. His portraits generally were deficient in grace. His draperies poor and ill-cast, and he showed no ability to overcome the graceless stiffness which then prevailed in dress. Yet he possessed much merit, and his portraits have maintained a respectable second rank. He enjoyed a long career in portrait art, but Lawrence and others had for many years succeeded to the monopoly of fashion and reputation before Beechey finally retired. He sold his pictures, studies, engravings, and materials by auction in 1836, and removed to Hampstead, where he died 28th January, 1839, at the age of eighty-six. The gossip of art has left little to tell of Beechey, but we learn he was of the old school, who did not abstain from the thoughtless use of unmeaning oaths. Calling on Constable, the landscape painter, he addressed him, "Why, d—n it, Constable, what a d—d fine picture you are making; but you look d—d ill, and have got a d—d bad cold." It is said that in his latter years he complained of the increasing sobriety and decreasing conviviality of both artists and patrons of art. At one of the annual dinners of the Academy he remarked that it was confoundedly slow to what was the wont in his younger days, when the company did not separate until a duke and a painter were both put under the table from the effects of the bottle.

His portraits of the King and Queen form the frontispieces to Boydell's two volumes of the Shakspeare Gallery, and a whole-length by him of the worthy alderman is placed over the entrance door of the same court in Guild-

hall in which hang the "Rizzio" of Opie, and the "Wat Tyler" of Northcote. It is a portrait of no great merit, but it represents a citizen who did much for commerce, and was before his age to honour it by linking it with art. We much regretted to see the filthy state in which it was when we last visited the hall. It is with no wish to cast blame on the city authorities, for what is everybody's business is nobody's; but to call attention to the condition of what is in some sense national property, that these remarks are made. The surface of the portrait is in patches, sunk in in some places, bearing out in others, and everywhere covered with a viscid coat of grimy dirt, while the effluvia from the occasionally crowded court has run down in brown treacly streams, appearing as if the picture has been spit upon. This is more or less the case with all the other pictures. The Rizzio has a bad stretcher and is parting from it, and perishing for want of varnish, while many of the others would be restored to freshness by simply washing them under judicious direction.

It fell to our lot to prove upon one of the pictures belonging to the corporation the dirt which rapidly accumulates from the bad atmosphere of a crowded court. At the great Exhibition of 1862, a few drops of water through a broken pane in the skylight fell on the picture of "Apollo at the Fountain," by W. Hamilton, R.A., and being wiped off, disclosed such a bright spot that it became necessary to wash the whole picture. This was done with extreme care under our own immediate inspection, and resulted in a perfectly renewed picture, fresh almost as from the easel, and a pailful of water that might have been mistaken for Warren's blacking.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ANIMAL PAINTERS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Animal Portraiture—Its Encouragement in England—*John Wootton* attains Distinction in this Art—*James Seymour*, horse painter—Some Account of Him—*George Stubbs, A.R.A.*—Abandoned the mere Portrait Treatment, and Advanced the Art of Animal Painting—*Sawrey Gilpin, R.A.*—Excelled in his Horses—*George Morland*—His Precocity—Early Training and Teaching—Idle and Vicious Habits—Preyed upon by Schemers and Low Dealers—His First Pictures—Marriage—His Low Associates—Paints from Hand to Mouth—Yet Lives in Reckless Extravagance—Improves in his Art notwithstanding—Character of his Art—His Hopeless Difficulties—Lead at last to Degeneracy in his Pictures—Thrown into Prison by his Creditors—Death—Opinion upon his Art and the Causes of its Popularity.

Our countrymen have ever been lovers of the chase and of the racecourse, and, such being the case, it is natural that after the portraits of the squire and his dame, and the goodly array of sons and daughters who served to uphold the family name, the portraits of their most famous hunters and racers would be objects of desire to our county gentlemen. Hence it is that while in the dining-room and staircase gallery of the country mansions of our old landed proprietors we are often introduced to their interminable ancestry, be-wigged and be-powdered, or to the toasts and beauties that fired them to feats of noble horsemanship, the hall itself is surrounded with portraits of the animals that carried them in the field, or filled or emptied their pockets on the race-

course, each horse led, as it might be, by the favourite groom or the successful jockey of the day. Monsieur Rouquet, in his *Present State of the Arts in England*, published 1755, says:—"We may rank among the number of portrait painters those who are employed in drawing the pictures of horses in England. As soon as a racehorse has acquired some fame, they have him immediately drawn to the life: this for the most part is a dry profile; but in other respects bearing a good resemblance; they generally clap the figure of some jockey or other upon his back, which is but poorly done."

The love for this art at the time we are describing was gratified by *John Wootton*, an animal and landscape painter of merit, who was a pupil of John Wyck the younger, and imbibed the traditions of the Flemish school of painters. He furnished the halls and galleries of our old family mansions with views of the estate, and portraits of the class we have described, of the favourite horses and dogs. Frequenting Newmarket, he made himself known as an animal painter. He drew with great spirit. He painted hunting-pieces, which were much esteemed, and were engraved, and he received as high as forty guineas for the portrait of a single horse. Later, he applied himself to landscape, imitating, but at a long distance, the manner of Claude and then of Poussin. Constable, R.A., says: "Wootton, without manual dexterity, left landscape art in unredeemed poverty and coarseness." Looking at him, however, rather as a horse painter, we are inclined to think better of him. His works may be seen in the royal collection, and at Blenheim, Longleat, Althorp,

Ditchley, and other mansions, but their merits are obscured by the blackness which has come over them.

It cannot be said that patronage of the kind alluded to did, or was likely to do, much for art. The leather-breeched, top-booted gentry of the time, who rode hard, drank hard, and swore hard, were not men to care for art, or to let the artist think for himself in any way. They knew what were the points of good horseflesh, as well or better than the painter, and all such points were to be displayed as in a diagram; for it was a coloured map of the horse, rather than a picture, they required: and, accordingly, a simple profile of the animal, with the stud-groom in accurate livery standing at his head, was what pleased the patron best; and as it gave little trouble to the painter, he in his turn was satisfied to do the animal in the stereotyped attitude, and to put his money easily in his pocket, since he found in doing so that he best pleased his employers. In fact the squirearchy—the great patrons of the animal-painters of that day—were not far in advance of the breeders of fat cattle of our own, who have their artists, as the former had, and their own type of beauty and fitness. A profile view; a line ruled from the nape of the neck to the insertion of the tail, from which there must be no deviation; a huge mass of unshapen fat, supported on four thin sticks, is the acme of perfection in their eyes; and as such art has its patrons, it has also its followers, who pitch their easels amidst the tumultuous crowd at the cattle show, and at easy prices provide pictorial decorations for the parlours or eating-rooms of the delighted and approving graziers and butchers. The art of the past age was not so degraded, it is true;

since it had for its subject the noble and trained form of the hunter and the racer, not the diseased and fat-burdened beasts of the grazier, but its rules were equally inflexible, and as traditional as the art of ancient Egypt. Wootton, who was really an artist of some power, succumbed to it, and left proofs of its practice in almost all our home and midland counties. He made some property by his art, and built himself a house in Cavendish Square, which he decorated with his paintings, and here he died in January, 1765.

During Wootton's career, *James Seymour* was also celebrated as a horse painter. He was born in 1702, the son of a banker, who was the friend of Lely, and fond of art. Possessing great power of drawing, he drew the horse with the pen with much spirit and character: but he was too idle to study; and his attempt to give more finish to his work, and his bad style of colour, showed his defects. It is told that the Duke of Somerset employed him to paint his stud at his seat in Sussex; and that having admitted the artist to his table, he drank to him as "cousin Seymour;" and took offence when the artist expressed his belief that he really was of the same race. The "proud Duke" left the table, and ordered his steward to pay and dismiss his quondam cousin, but finding afterwards the impossibility of getting an artist to complete the work, he sent again for Seymour, who retorted, "My lord, I will now prove that I am of your grace's family, for I won't come." It is probable that Seymour's finished works are few, for we find little mention of them. He died in 1752. He is best known by his drawings; we are unable now to point to a painting by him.

George Stubbs, A.R.A., who succeeded Wootton as an animal painter, was born in 1724, at Liverpool, where his father practised as a surgeon. It is probable that his attention was thus especially directed to anatomy, and that he continued earnest in the study after he had finally elected the profession of painting. Little is known of his early life, or even whether his original bent was to the arts; but we learn that when about thirty years of age he paid a visit to Italy, extending his journey as far as Rome, and that on his return he settled in London, and soon became known for his talents both as a painter and an anatomist. In 1776 he published *The Anatomy of the Horse*, with eighteen plates drawn from nature, and engraved by his own hands. In the title-page he styles himself "painter." Barry, R.A., thus alludes to him in his correspondence from Rome:—"There is one Stubbs here, who paints horses and other animals with a surprising reality. He is very accurate; and *The Anatomy of a Horse*, which he has etched from dissections he made, will soon be published, and may be worth your seeing."

Stubbs soon became the fashionable horse painter of the day, and was patronized by all who delighted in the art; but his anatomical knowledge fitted him for something better than the mere lay figure treatment of the animal which satisfied the friends of his equine *sitters*. He aspired to be ranked as an artist, and to treat the horse as a heroic animal, instead of the tame prosaic steed that was led forth from the stable to show its points and breeding by its mere bony and muscular development, rather than by expression and energy of action and motion. He aimed to show his skill in de-

signing this noble animal in its wonderful variety of form; in motion, and under the influence of artistic foreshortenings, as well as grouped in combination with others of the higher animals of the chase. Barry, who seems to have attentively watched his progress, again writes of Stubbs, and praises his works warmly; he says, "His 'Lion killing a Horse;' a 'Tiger lying in his Den,' as large as life, appearing as it were disturbed, and listening; which were in the last year's exhibition, are pictures that must rouse and agitate the most inattentive; he is now painting a lion, panting and out of breath, lying with his paws over a stag he has run down: it is inimitable."

In 1780 the Royal Academy acknowledged Stubbs' talents by electing him an associate of the body, and in the following year a full member. But on his election, like Wright of Derby, he declined to present one of his own works to the Academy, and the diploma was withheld, Stubbs choosing rather to remain an associate, in which rank he continued during the remainder of his life. It has been said that the painter's fortune was greater than his merit, in that his works were engraved by such eminent artists as Woollett, Earlom, and Green, and there is no doubt that the celebrity of Woollett's graver would have given reputation to works of far less excellence than those of Stubbs. But these very engravings are a testimony to the painter's popularity, and it is doubtful, even in our own day, if the taste of the general public is not satisfied with subjects of far less merit as works of art, than the well-known four "sporting pictures" engraved by Woollett: or "The Horse Frightened at a Lion," "The Farmer's Wife and the Raven,"

or "The Tigers at Play." Stubbs' name, however, is more frequently associated with his picture of "The Fall of Phaeton," which he is said to have repeated four times. As lately seen, it hardly sustains its reputation; although the horses are well and spiritedly designed, the whole is scattered and disjointed in effect, and wanting in the ideal treatment which such a subject requires. Horses naturally painted, plunging, kicking, and falling through the air, give us little idea of how

> "Phœbus' fiery carre
> In hast was climbing up the Eastern hill,
> Full envious that night so long his room did fill;"

added to which, the picture is unpleasantly painted, solid and heavy in execution, and in its general colour appeals disagreeably to the eye.

Stubbs was ardent in the pursuit of his art, an indefatigable dissector, fearing none of the attendant dangers. It is told of him that he was of great muscular strength, in so much that on one occasion he carried a dead horse on his back up a narrow staircase to his dissecting-room, a feat, without the animal was of the smallest of the equine race, which does not admit of our belief. For the latter part of his life he was very abstemious in his food, and a strict water-drinker. Yet he lived to enjoy eighty-two years of vigorous life, dying on the 10th July, 1806. On the whole, the art made a great advance under Stubbs. It is true that most of his income was derived from horse portraiture, somewhat such as has been described; but his knowledge of anatomy led him to nobler subjects for his brush, and to extend in many directions the field of art which he had chosen.

Sawrey Gilpin, R.A., was another artist of the eighteenth century, who earned distinction as an animal painter. He was born at Carlisle, in 1733, of an old Cumberland family, and when fourteen was sent to London, where it was intended he should be brought up to some business. But his desire to pursue art led to his being placed with Samuel Scott, the marine painter. His affections turned to cattle rather than to ships, and he soon attained much power as a draftsman. At Newmarket he gained the favour of the Duke of Cumberland, then ranger of Windsor Park, who gave him apartments, and many facilities for his improvement. He excelled greatly in his portraits of horses, and was fully employed. He painted wild animals with equal success, and tried some subjects in history; among them of course the "Story of Phaeton." He exhibited at Spring Gardens, in 1770, a sketch in oil of "Darius Obtaining the Persian Empire by the Neighing of his Horse;" and in the following year, "Gulliver Taking Leave of the Houynhnms," both of them works which attracted much notice. He painted both in oil and water colour; all his works were marked by great spirit, but his colouring was poor, and his pictures failed from the absence of higher technical qualities. He was elected A.R.A., 1795, R.A., 1797. He died in 1807. The Rev. W. Gilpin, who wrote several works on picturesque beauty, was his brother.

In treating of the animal painters, it will be desirable next in order to class *George Morland.* Although his art was of such a mixed character that it comprised both landscapes, rustic figures, and animals; still it is as an animal painter—as a painter of pigs and sheep and asses

—that he is principally known. These, in combination with rustic figures, formed the subject of his pictures, while the landscape part of his art was never much more than a background for them.

George Morland was born in 1763, just at the time when the artists of this country awoke to a sense of their own strength, and found a new aid to progress in the establishment of public exhibitions of their works. Henry Morland, the father of George, was himself a crayon draughtsman, painter, and engraver, and a man of some reputation in his day. He was already advanced in life, being fifty-one years of age, when his son was born. His works survive for us in the mezzo-tints scraped after his fire-light and candle-light pictures. Respectable and respected both for his art and his manner of life, he passed for a well-educated man, and brought up his family with more than ordinary strictness and regularity.

Of this family George was the eldest and favourite child, and early displayed a talent for art, combining with an active restless disposition, great drollery and love of fun, with occasional fits of melancholy. These, the sure accompaniment of an artistic temperament, were increased, perhaps, in his case, by his being debarred from associating with boys of his own age, and subjected to the discipline of a parent who had long passed the period of youth. Young Morland had made some progress in art when only seven years of age, and at ten exhibited drawings at the Royal Academy, which it is evident must have had some merit. The very precocity of his art was perhaps the first misfortune of his life, since at fourteen years of age he was articled to his father, and his days henceforth devoted to continuous and steady application.

His father seemed to consider every hour not spent at his easel as wasted,—a discipline so opposed to the natural temperament of the boy, as to make labour hateful to the young artist. Under his father, however, he attained great power of hand and correctness of eye, and learnt to paint by copying the works of the Dutch and Flemish schools. Although the schools of the Royal Academy were now open to the rising artists of the metropolis, young Morland was not allowed to study there, since his father—over anxious about his morals—did not like his mingling with the students who resorted to them for instruction, and conducted his education principally himself. Morland is sometimes looked upon as an untaught genius, who obtained his knowledge without the aid of schools; but on the contrary, no teaching could be more direct and continuous than that he received from his anxious parent.

After some time passed in preliminary study, he attempted original sketches from the poets, and made many illustrations from Spencer's "Fairy Queen" as well as from ballads, such as "Robin Grey," "Margaret's Ghost," etc. These were bought and engraved and found a ready sale. Occasionally, also, he tried his powers in caricature, and soon showed, if not a refined, yet a sufficiently fertile invention. At this time he rarely sketched from nature on the spot, but stored his mind with the broad characteristics of his subject to reproduce them from memory at home, and it is from this cause that there is little of individual imitation in his pictures, but rather that general aspect of the scene or subject which often appeals to the mind more than the most literal truth.

As he grew in years and became conscious of his own powers, young Morland rebelled against the restraint imposed upon him at home, and the severe and continuous labour exacted from him. When about nineteen he first began to evade this discipline, from which he shortly afterward broke entirely loose, following a dissolute course, and justifying himself without shame and without self-reproach. His innate dislike to labour was soon apparent; he avoided all regular study or occupation, and gave himself up to extravagance, debauchery, and folly.

Means of subsistence, however, must be gained, and his abilities and necessities soon attracted those who live by preying upon others; he became the debtor and slave of a picture dealer, who tempted him to lodge in his house, and while he pandered cheaply to his vices and follies, kept him in a state of bondage. "His meals were carried up to him by his employer's boy, and when his dinner was brought—which usually consisted of sixpennyworth of meat from a cook-shop, with a pint of beer—he would sometimes venture to ask if he might not have a pennyworth of pudding. Yet even under this treatment he contributed so much to the profits of his employer as to paint a sufficient number of pictures to fill a room to which the price of admittance was half-a-crown." From this condition he escaped, and was assisted at Margate by a lady who found profitable employment for him in taking miniature portraits; with her he went to France, where he might also have obtained employment of the same kind, but his restless nature prevented him, at this important crisis, from settling to any steady labour, and he resumed his former reckless habits. He went to lodge with Mr. William Ward the mezzotint engraver, and while

with him seems for a time to have pursued his painting with some steadiness and in a manner tending to his improvement, possibly influenced by a growing attachment to Miss Ward. He painted "The Idle and Industrious Mechanic," a pair of small pictures, and "The Idle Laundress and Industrious Cottager"—strange subjects for a man who could have paid little heed to the scripture precept, and was teaching others while he was himself on the high-road to become a castaway. "Letitia, or Seduction" followed, a series of six pictures depicting the fall of a young country girl from innocence, through successive scenes of depravity and suffering. Morland is said to have studied every part of these works from nature, even to the minutest details; the figures are well drawn and the whole executed with considerable skill. The fashion for these serial works, derived no doubt from Hogarth, was common to many of the painters of that day. A little later we find Northcote engaged, as we have described, on a series not unlike the subject handled by Morland.

In July 1786, the painter married the sister of his friend Ward, who followed his example by marrying a month after one of the Miss Morlands. But marriage produced no reform in Morland's reckless and irregular habits; he soon quarrelled with his brother-in-law, and gave himself up to the company of low associates and to habits of intemperance and dissipation, from which he never after was able to disentangle himself. He painted rapidly, under the necessity of supplying the means of dissipation for himself and his companions. He sold his pictures for anything he could get, yet his genius made him popular notwithstanding, and his productions were eagerly sought after His boon companions also acted as

his agents, and sometimes got as much as five guineas for what he had formerly been paid only five shillings. Such was the request for the painter's works that he might have demanded large prices; numbers of purchasers resorted to him; the subjects he painted were level with the taste of a large and increasing public; his fame, and with it his credit, increased: he began to plunge recklessly into debt, boasted his bills were as good as the Bank of England, kept ten or twelve horses at livery, and soon was surrounded by sharks of all kinds, whom he converted into picture dealers; a class of men not very strict in their principles, but when the business was in the hands of a cobbler, or grafted on to the prior training of a horse chaunter or a jockey, it was still more likely to be mixed up with chicanery and fraud. By his absurd and useless extravagance Morland had incurred debts in eighteen months to the amount of nearly 4,000*l*., and was compelled to abscond for a while, until his friends could attempt some arrangement of his affairs; but unable to submit to any restraint on his inclinations, his career was equally reckless whether at large or in hiding. Yet for a time he continued to improve in his art; he overcame the somewhat laboured finish of his first manner, and the ease that was induced by the rapid pencil required to meet his urgent wants, had not yet resulted in his using up the stores of his memory.

About 1790 Morland arrived at the meridian of his art, but maintained his elevation only a short time, and soon began rapidly to decline. "The Gipsies," dated 1792, belonging to Mr. Fordham of Royston, which was exhibited in the International Exhibition of 1862, is a good example of this period. The size of that work is

larger than usual with Morland; it is painted with a full pencil and evidently with great ease and rapidity, and is equally luminous in the lights and the shadows, showing the great value of onceness of execution; yet like all other pictures of the master, it is very unsatisfying. One looks in vain for any subtlety of feeling, character, expression, or even of execution. The same unvarying handling throughout, easy and facile no doubt, but after a while as tedious to the eye as to the mind; the landscape wanted atmosphere, and greys and ochres predominated too much in the general hues. Such being the character of his works, it is not surprising that, though few painters have been so popular during lifetime, his pictures did not rise in value after his death.

As his difficulties made no change in his habits, his debts continued to increase notwithstanding the rapid means at his command for satisfying them. He was continually making compositions with his creditors to pay 120*l.* per month, 100*l.*, 50*l.*, 10*l.*, and was earnest to do so, but after one or two payments constantly neglected to fulfil his engagements. Hunted from house to house by noisy creditors, always compounding for his debts, but never keeping any engagement he had entered into, he lived in constant dread of a prison; the resources of his memory once worked out, how was an artist, plunged into such hopeless degradation, and beset with such terrors, to realize any more of the true freshness of that rural life in which lay the subjects for his pencil; he could not leave home from dread of the bailiffs who were continually on the watch for him, and the country with its pigs and its sheep must be sought within his own walls. His excesses not only continued but increased;

his naturally fine constitution was undermined by them. He now seldom left his painting-room: "he even took his meals in it, though never at any regular periods, but would sometimes at seven in the morning have beef-steaks and onions, with purl and gin or a pot of porter for breakfast. His dinner he would take at eleven, twelve, one, or three o'clock, according as his appetite served. He seldom ate his meals with his wife, and though he kept several servants, would cook his own food and eat it off a chair by the side of his easel; while in the same apartment were to be seen dogs of various kinds, pigeons flying, and pigs running about. During the whole day he swallowed all kinds of strong liquors; tea he could not drink, but when invited to partake of this refreshment he would shake his head and say it was very pernicious and made his hand shake." We remember having seen, in the possession of an old friend, a pair of small pictures painted about the latter end of Morland's life, and being told by their possessor that he sat beside the painter's easel while he completed them, and having paid for, took them away with him wet, the only way to secure an original work of such a master.

In November, 1799, Morland was arrested, and, obtaining the rules, took a house in Lambeth, which was a rendezvous for all the profligates of the prison. He was daily intoxicated, and generally lay the whole night on the floor. The ruin of his health and character were soon completed. He was released under the Insolvent Act in 1802, but was now broken-hearted and downcast, harassed by diseased fears and fancies, his intellect and sight also impaired. He was again arrested for a publican's score, and overwhelmed with misfortune, neglect,

and self-reproach, he drank, in a state of desperation, great quantities of spirits, and after eight days of delirious fever, died in a spunging house on the 29th October, 1804, in his forty-second year. His wife, to whom—it is hard to believe—as stated by his biographer, he was sincerely attached, fell into convulsive fits on learning his death, and finished a life, which must have been one of hopeless misery, on the 2nd of November, in her thirty-seventh year, and both were interred together. He had shortly before written his own epitaph—alas too truly—"Here lies a drunken dog."

We have cursorily alluded to the great desire evinced for Morland's works during his lifetime, while it is notorious that since his death they have greatly declined in value—to what are we to attribute the change? What rank does his art take in respect to that of his countrymen generally, and what effect has it had on the English school?

Any one who will read with attention a more extended life of the painter, will be aware that his reputation in his own day was partly accidental, and largely arose out of the very irregularities which we must condemn. Pressed by his necessities he began life, taking any sum obtainable for his productions. They were slight facile-subjects from common life, which all could understand, at prices for customers of all classes, and such as the regular dealers in these works could readily find a market for. He gathered around him an intermediate set of agents, who made his works the subject of gambling speculations for their own profit, obtaining his pictures and drawings at low rates, and frequently doubling the price merely for the trouble of carrying them to the regular dealers. He

was looked upon as a wild erratic genius, who produced without thought or labour a mine of wealth for those who, by flattery or any other arts, could get him into their power; and this feeling spread from his pot companions and associates to the dealers, and from them to the purchasers of pictures. All were eager to possess works which were only to be obtained as it were by lottery, and which all hoped would turn up prizes either then or in the future. Had he produced his pictures by patient labour and forethought, they would not have esteemed them, or been eager to purchase them ere the colours were well dry.

We have passed over most of the stories of wild riot and excess that marked the short life of the painter, but are not prepared to say that his freaks and follies were entirely hindrances, or that they did not in many cases prove of assistance to him in that low walk of art which he had made his own. He was quick of observation, and gathered hints readily from the society into which he was thrown. Thus one of his first follies, related by Dawe, his biographer, as taking place when Morland had not yet completed his apprenticeship, shows this readiness of perception in the painter. He had been spending the evening with a roystering company, at the "Cheshire Cheese," Russell Court, and on leaving about ten o'clock, took it into his head to start by the Hoy to Gravesend. He arrived there a perfect stranger, about two o'clock in the morning, and in company with two strollers, took the road in the dark to Chatham, and ended by joining one of them in a short sea-voyage in which he was nearly wrecked. Returning almost penniless to the "congress" at Russell Court, we are told he

brought out such a fund of information on nautical matters, as to perfectly astonish the company. It is quite evident that he had gained more by his wild adventure than if he had remained at home pinned to his easel.

Again his boon companions were his models, sitting and poseing for him. In "The Sportsman's Return," "Dirty Brooks" the cobbler, one of his pot companions and agents, is represented leaning out of his own stall. When surrounded by companions that would have entirely impeded the progress of other men, "Morland might be said to be in an academy in the midst of models—he would get one to stand for a hand, another for a foot, another for a head, an attitude, or a figure"—nay, he often regulated his compositions, and that in some of his best works, entirely by the chance presence of some choice spirit whom he could use as a model. He would set the low associates, who surrounded him while painting, to watch for passers-by suitable to paint into his pictures, and despatch them to induce these wayfarers to come and be painted, treating his sitters liberally with beer, spirits, and food, and making them satisfied and delighted by his good fellowship. He once took it into his head to serve the office of parish constable, and although it was a freak of which he was soon heartily tired, yet it will be seen that even this he managed to turn to his professional advantage. Dawe tells us that, "Just as Morland was about to begin his four pictures of 'The Deserter,' a sergeant, drummer, and soldier, on their way to Dover in pursuit of a deserter, came in for a billet. Seeing that these men would answer his purpose, he accompanied them to the 'Britannia,' and treated them

plentifully, while he was earnestly questioning them on the modes of recruiting, with every particular attendant on the trial of deserters by court-martial, and their punishments. In order that he might gain a still better opportunity for information, he provided his new acquaintances with ale, wine, and tobacco, took them to his house, and caroused with them all night, employing himself busily in sketching, making inquiries, and noting down whatever appeared likely to serve his purpose; nor was he satisfied with this, for during the whole of the next day, Sunday, he detained them in his painting room, and availed himself of every possible advantage which the occasion afforded." When flying from the pursuit of his creditors he sought refuge in the country, he visited the cottages of the peasantry, made himself at home with them, and with the habits of their household and children. We are also told that in company with Brooks, he at times associated with the gipsies, remaining with them several days together, adopting their mode of life, and sleeping with them in barns at night. Wherever he was, he always found the companions with whom he associated proud to exert themselves in procuring animals of every kind for his study. Thus his low habits aided him in the art he pursued; well had it been if they had not led him further still into excess and intemperance. Hogarth must no doubt have been present at many of the scenes he painted so truthfully; but he contracted no bad habits, and when he left the gin-shop or the night-cellar, left for ever the company of those with whom he had been associated for the moment.

Morland's name as a painter stands out prominently before that of many of his contemporaries of far higher

merit; it was spread by the vast number of works his facile hand produced, and by their still wider dispersion by means of engraving. His pictures lent themselves readily to mezzotint, and the subjects suiting the popular taste, prints from them had an unprecedented sale, not only in this country, but also abroad. Of his "Dancing Dogs," and "Selling Guinea Pigs," five hundred pairs of prints were sold in a few weeks, and when the four plates of "The Deserter" were published, a single dealer immediately gave orders for nine dozen sets. Of the number of his works, or at least of those attributed to him, some idea may be formed by Dawe's statement that Morland painted for his brother alone, as shown by his brother's books, four hundred and ninety-two works during the last eight years of his life, notwithstanding frequent indisposition; and besides these, perhaps three hundred more for other people, and also made probably upwards of one thousand drawings during the same period.

We have from good authority a fact which closely relates to the great number of the works attributed to Morland. He was for some years (commencing about 1794) under articles to Mr. B——, a picture dealer, who employed him in painting original pictures at his own house; his daily service commencing early, and concluding at dinner time, probably twelve o'clock. Immediately Morland had left, expert copyists were employed in making accurate and elaborate repetitions of his day's work, which were carefully *concealed*. Returning to his own work on the following morning, any changes, which, upon reconsideration, Morland might think well to make in his picture, were in the afternoon transferred to each

copy in progress under the hands of his treacherous copyists. Thus at least four or five pictures were carried on *together* to completion, the painter never suspecting the trick that was played; each of these counterfeits bearing those marks of changes in design and alterations of effect that would seem to give proof of its genuineness.

Now, allowing for what is well known, that many of the works attributed to him, especially those in his brother's hands, were spurious, still even these tended to spread abroad a knowledge of the artist, and to make him at least more widely known than men who, seeking the higher refinements of art, spend months over a single picture.

In the production of such art, the artist of necessity repeated himself; and works so imperfect, so hastily conceived, and painted with as little thought as previous study, were not likely to please after the fashion for them had passed away. Hence also, we cannot place Morland in the first rank of English art. His works, however, had this influence on its progress: they showed that there was a store of subjects in our own scenery, and a public to appreciate them; that without seeking inspiration in Italy or Greece, in the mountain or the torrent, or the wide-spread champagne studded with the ruins of past ages, an artist might succeed and be original. Henceforth "compositions," such as had pleased the town, from the pencil of Zuccarelli, had to rival them, and successfully to rival them, the simple pictures of our own picturesque land. Gainsborough had, in this respect, in some degree anticipated Morland; but even he clung a little to the best art of the Dutch. Morland threw aside all he had learnt from their school, and made an

art of his own. Gainsborough's pictures of this class were few, and in even his really rustic figures there was a touch of the grace and sweetness he lent to his lovely portraits. Morland's rustics were loutish clowns grouped with the most vulgar of the domestic animals.

We have classed him here as an animal painter, which, it has been shown, comprises only a part of his art; but we have alluded also, to the other subjects of his pencil. As an animal painter, he was not like his predecessors, a portrait painter of animals; for this he was unfitted, and too vulgarly independent. He was ill-grounded in anatomy, and consequently succeeded best in portraying those animals whose forms were most hidden by their covering, such as sheep, pigs, rabbits, &c., and when he chose the horse, it was generally an aged one, not so much on account of its picturesqueness, as for the strong character of its form.

CHAPTER XIII.

PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS.

Origin of the Art—Manner of Painting of the Early Miniaturists—Progress made by the Early Tinters and Topographic Draftsmen—Effect of the Materials used on the Improvement of the Art—Mode of Tinting as first practised—*John Cozens* adds Poetry and Colour to the new Art—His great Merits—*Paul Sandby's* Art—*William Payne*—His Advance and Influence—*Warwick Smith*—*Thomas Girtin* wholly changes the Method—Is assisted by Dr. Munro—His great Progress—Method of Working described—And his Pigments—His social Habits—And early Death—Impress left on the Art—*W. M. Turner, R.A.*, as water-colour Painter—He first freely Uses local Colour—His Manner analysed—His powerful Influence on water-colour Art.

THE great artists who contributed to the foundation of the Royal Academy, and by their talents and reputation set it fairly afloat in public opinion, had hardly passed from the scene of their labours, when a new art, or what may well be called such, began to rise into importance. The art of painting in water colours is so peculiarly English, that it may be designated as a national art; and growing up from this time side by side with oil painting, it has singularly influenced that branch of art, which has, in its turn, beneficially reacted upon it.

Although water-colour painting had been practised both in this country and abroad, long previous to oil painting, and was thus the older art; and had, by our great miniaturists of the age of the Tudors and the Stuarts, been carried to the highest degree of perfection,

it was, as in its original use, practised differently from the art of our own times, being indeed but a species of tempera painting, wherein the ground was obscured and hidden, and the colours used opaquely as in the ancient missal paintings.

But though the miniaturists and "painters in little" began with using opaque colours, their practice gradually changed to the use of transparent pigments, and the preservation of the white ground. Thus we find the works of Hilliard and the two Olivers more opaque than those of their successors. These distinguished artists used white almost as freely as the missal painters, and occasionally gold also, in the dresses, jewelry, and ornaments of their portraits. In a portrait of Henry, Prince of Wales, son of James II., by Isaac Oliver, now in the possession of Mr. Danby Seymour, the brocaded dress of the Prince is enriched largely with gold, and all but the flesh is painted with opaque colours, as was the case with most works of the period. At the same time masses of colour in the draperies were laid on with transparent pigments, as is, in the above portrait, a crimson curtain on the left of the Prince, and as the lips have been, although they have now perished or scaled off.

At first such works were wrought on vellum or thin card-board, and we have no precise date when sheets of ivory were substituted, probably about the middle of the seventeenth century. A pocket-book, said to have belonged to Samuel Cooper, whom writers of his own time call "the prince of limners," "the most famous limner of the world for a face," has come down to us, containing fifteen portraits in various stages of comple-

tion. It is now in the Loan Court at the South Kensington Museum, and is the property of Mr. Edwin H. Lawrence, of Abbey Farm, Hampstead. These portraits are all on card, some being left as at the first sitting, whilst one or two are completely finished. The following seems to have been the process of painting, and whether by Cooper, or, as is more probable, by Flatman, gives us an insight into the mode of working at that period. The outline was suggestively sketched, and then the smooth surface of the card, under the flesh, covered with a thin wash of opaque white, which, as he used it, must have been an excellent pigment, as it has not changed in any instance. Then with a brownish lake tint the features have been most delicately and beautifully drawn in, and the broad shades under the eyebrows, the nose, and the chin, washed in flatly with the same tint. This seems to have completed the first sitting. In the next, the painter put in the local colour of the hair, washing in at the same time its points of relief or union with the background, in many cases adding a little white to his transparent colour to make the hue absorbent, and to give it a slight solidity. The shadows of the hair were then hatched in, and the features and face in succeeding sittings hatched or stippled into roundness. Finally, the colours of the dress were washed in, in some cases transparently, in others with a slight admixture of white, and the shadows of the dress given with the local colour of the shadows. In the fine portrait of Inigo Jones, by Cooper, belonging to Mr. Danby Seymour, the background, which is sky and landscape, has been painted with opaque colours, as has also the white collar and the dark dress, while

on the flesh there are no opaque pigments. This, modified by the nature of the background, is the process followed in the portraits of the Earl of Derby, and the Countess of Sunderland, by the same artist, and belonging to the same Collector.

Some of these works were, however, painted wholly in transparent colours, as is abundantly proved by an entry in Vanderdoort's catalogue, which reads thus:—"No. 21. Done by Mr. Frossley, the Emperor Rodolf's limner. Item.: Another limned picture, done upon the right light, of the Emperor Rodolphus II., painted upon parchment, *being transparent, to be seen on both sides*, holding against the sky." Some who practised as portrait painters in miniature, copied the works of the great masters "in little," and even painted figure subjects, inventions of their own. Thus in the catalogue of the King's limnings, which we have just quoted, we find registered, "A great limned piece of 'The Burial of Christ,' which was *invented* by Isaac Oliver, and was left unfinished at his decease, and now, by his Majesty's appointment, finished by his son, Peter Oliver." It is dated 1616, and the size of this great piece is given, 11½ inches by 1 foot 3½ inches. In the same catalogue, is inserted a copy of Raphael's "St. George," dated 1628, by Peter Oliver, 9½ inches by 7 inches, and eight copies from other masters, evidently highly valued. Vertue himself copied in water colour upon vellum, pictures in the Royal Collection; and Walpole, in his *Anecdotes*, makes mention of other painters in water colours, among whom he enumerates some who painted landscapes, flowers, &c. Nor must it be overlooked that highly-finished water-colour drawings, wrought with

transparent colours, had been produced in the Dutch school, particularly by Ostade (1613-1671), Backhuysen (1631-1709), and Dusart (1665-1704). There is in the Print Room of the British Museum, a fine example by Backhuysen, "A View of Amsterdam from the Sea," which for its size, its elaborate and beautiful finish, and its perfect state of preservation, is unrivalled. While the works in this manner by Ostade and Dusart are well known in the cabinets of collectors.

Thus we find the various methods of our modern painters in water colours well known to their predecessors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—the practice of using transparent colours, of mingling transparent with opaque colour, of imitating the local colour of objects in shade, of hatching and stippling—most indeed of the resources of the art—applied, it is true, rather to the human figure than to landscapes, although we have given instances of the very successful use of transparent pigments in this class of art also. It must be confessed that the foreign landscape painters of the latter end of the eighteenth century confined their practice almost entirely to body-colours, *guash* drawings as they are called, such as the literal view of the Lake of Geneva, by Hackeart, dated 1782, and the more poetical pastoral by Zuccarelli, both of which are in South Kensington Museum; while other Italians composed from the noble scenery of Italy small pictures painted by the same process, which are found in many of our old collections; and the scene painters of the day practised their art in the same medium.

We find some interesting particulars respecting the methods of the early miniature painters, in the *Compleat*

Gentleman, written by Henry Peacham, M.A., and published in 1661. After praising "old Mr. Hilliard, and Mr. Isaac Oliver, as inferior to none in Christendom for the countenance in small," he goes on to say, "Since a man is the worthiest of all creatures, and such pleasing variety in countenance is so disposed of by the Divine Providence, that among ten thousand you shall not see one like another, you shall begin to draw a man's face, in which, as in all other creatures, you must take your beginning at the forehead, and so draw downward till you have finished;" and then he gives us the method of preparing "your tablet for a picture in small." "Take," says he, "of the fairest and smoothest pasteboard you can get, and with a sleek-stone rub as smooth and even as you can; that done, take the fine skin of an abortive, which you may buy in Paternoster Row, and other places (it being the finest parchment that is), and with starch thin laid on, and the skin well stretched and smooth-pressed within some book or the like, prepare your ground or tablet; then, according to the general complexion of the face you are to draw, lay on a weak colour; that done, trace out the eyes, nose, mouth, and ears with lake or red lead, and if the complexion be swarthy, add either of sea-coal or lamp-black, to deepen and shadow it. When you have thus done, lay it by for a day, or till it be well dry; then, by little and little, work it with a curious hand, with the lively colour, till you have brought it to perfection." This description agrees with many notices in Charles I.'s catalogue, by Vanderdoort; such as, "A little round vellum young ladies' picture, in an old-fashioned black cap, bare-necked, the vellum being wrinkled by *varnishing*, and the blue

ground also wronged;" or "upon a blue grounded card, the picture of Dr. Chambers, physician to Henry VIII.;" or "done by Hans Holbein, upon a grounded card—one of the Duke of Brandon's children." These are often described as "in a white ivory-turned box," yet the use of ivory as a *ground* does not occur.

But water-colour art, as now practised, neither grew out of the early method of the missal painters and illuminators followed by the miniaturists, nor from the tempera painting of the scene painter, but evidently from the humbler art of the topographer, from which its origin may be distinctly and clearly traced. It began with the tinted representations of antiquarian remains and ancient buildings, and was chiefly the offspring of the spirit of antiquarianism of the latter part of the last century. The artist painted on the inspiration of the antiquary and for the illustration of his books. He was frequently at the same time both the draftsman and the engraver; and though the names and works of those so employed are known, they have little claim to any record on the ground of their art-merits. In their productions, careful examination and the minute copying of parts and details were of primary importance; no conventional or ideal treatment was admissible; and truth of rendering was of more value than art or beauty. The outline being of the first consequence was carefully and firmly drawn, and often completed with the pen, with the light and shade simply added in black or grey. Afterwards such works advanced a step, and were slightly tinted with transparent washes, to indicate the local colour of the objects or scenery, the colour of the sky being frequently the most positive tint used. The careful

delineation of the many fine remains of abbeys, cathedrals, churches, castles, and mansions, was thus the aim of the early water-colour draftsman. Such subjects employed the pencils of Sandby, the two Rookers, Hearne, Webber, Alexander, Malton, Dayes, Byrne, and some others who were the true founders of the art.

Although most of the men we have just named were essentially topographers, the natural course of their professional practice led some of them into new scenes and foreign climes, extending their knowledge and observation of nature. *John Webber, R.A.* (B. 1752, D. 1795), accompanied Captain Cook, in 1776, on his last voyage, and brought home many drawings of the scenes and localities he had visited: some of these will be found in the collection at South Kensington. *William Alexander* (B. 1768, D. 1816) was draftsman to Lord Macartney's embassy to China in 1792, and some of his drawings, swarming with groups of Chinese, sparkle with life and colour. The direct reference to nature, both at home and abroad, which was the essence of the art of these men, was beginning to work a change, and was in itself a source of steady progress towards true art. Topography had given the first direction of the new art to landscape painting, and for a time it continued faithful to this impulse. It was impossible for men like the topographers, brought face to face with nature, though at first attending only to the most obvious facts and details which were their chief aim, not to observe also nature's more varied moods and changes; and it only required a man of genius to arise, who, pursuing the same course, should be able to give life and vitality to the meagre truthfulness of the topographer, to place

the art on a wholly different footing. In such hands, and with the new materials, there were no traditions of the "black masters" to stand in the way of progress—to prevent a man using his own eyes, and seeing nature as she really is. It was soon found that nature did not attitudinize into set compositions; that it was not necessary to be brown to be like her; that she did not insist upon dark foregrounds; and, in fine, that the imitation of nature's great truths was not inconsistent with the utmost variety; with selection of subject, and the choice of what is beautiful; while only inane insipidity can result from building on the works of bygone painters, or from memory, unaided by a constant recurrence to nature, the source of all truth.

As long as our painters imitated those who went before them rather than nature, there was little cause for Walpole's wonder that "in a country so profusely beautified with the amenities of nature we have produced so few good landscape painters." Such was Wootton's practice, who, we are told, "was a good master in the Italian style, and followed the manner of Gaspar;" and Lambert's, his pupil's, who imitated Poussin and Claude. In the same strain, M. Rouquet, in his work, published in 1755, *On the Present State of the Arts in England*, remarks:—"If painters constantly apply themselves to the study of nature, as it is reasonable to suppose, those who are employed in landscape painting in England ought to excel all others, as nothing can be so charming as the verdure in that country." Landscape art owes its first advance to the direct reference made to nature by the topographical draftsmen; its second to our water-colour artists who broke loose

from the fetters of mere antiquarianism. The exact transcript of local objects, places, or antiquities, naturally required a clear daylight, unobstructed by clouds or shadows, and free from that mystery of light and shade, so important a feature in art, by which the painter gives variety and contrast, and hides any unimportant or ugly features of the scene. Simple literal truth is all that is required of the topographer. The artist's aim is general truth and the vivid impression of scenery as a whole, and under those varied circumstances which elevate it from the commonplace into the poetical. He must study the wonders of sunlight and shade, of storm and calm; and those passing and evanescent beauties that arise from clouds, mists, and vapours. The mere tints of local colour must give way to the variety the seasons add to nature; and spring and summer, autumn and winter, seed-time and harvest, must be diligently studied in their varied hues, their many changes, their alternations of cheerful light and mysterious gloom. The men were already training who were to effect this change, though the advance was necessarily slow, and it may be desirable to trace their progress step by step.

Previously, however, to doing so, it is necessary to say a few words on the materials and pigments used, as in a degree regulating the new art, and of themselves obviating some of the defects of a moribund school. At first, no doubt, the topographer having made accurate sketches in outline on the spot, completed the drawing more at leisure at his own home; but the very portability of the new materials, the facility of execution in their first simple use, and the rapidity with which they dry, rendered painting in water colours direct from nature easy and agreeable,

and led to its practice. Again, as has already been hinted, the nature of the materials tended to emancipate the artist from the thraldom of the "black schools"—working on white grounds with transparent colours, whose luminousness depended on the careful preservation of the ground, the colour and richness of the pigments being destroyed if laid on too heavily; the constant effort of the artist was towards delicacy, purity, and precision of touch; this required onceness and clearness of aim. While the painter of the old school, relying on his memory, was groping blindly for some ideal treatment, some theory of tone or composition, the follower of the new art, stored with sketches, and referring directly and imitatively to nature, obtained, from the facility of execution afforded to him, a clearness, luminousness, and power hitherto unknown. Moreover, the extreme dilution of the pigments with pure water as a vehicle, permitted infinitely delicate gradations, obtained only with great difficulties by scumbling, and hardly possible in glazing in the more unctuous vehicle of oil.

A general description of the methods of executing "stained," "washed," or "tinted" drawings, as such are called in the early catalogues of the Royal Academy, has already been given, but the more precise directions of Edward Dayes in his *Instructions for Drawing and Colouring Landscapes*, published in 1808, may suitably precede an account of those changes which have led to the great excellence of the water-colour school. He tells us that his work is particularly intended to treat of the use of *transparent colours*, and he does not confine himself to the old method alone, but gives those improvements upon

it which had made such progress at the date of his publication. Supposing the outline complete, he says, "The first and most easy way is to make all the shadows and middle tints with Prussian blue and a brown Indian ink; the clouds being sketched in, and as light as possible, the student begins with the elementary part of the sky, laying it in with Prussian blue, rather tender, so as to leave himself the power of going over it once or twice afterwards, or as often as may be necessary; then, with the blue and a little Indian ink, lay in the lightest shades of the clouds, then the distance, if remote, with the same colour, rather stronger. Next proceed to the middle ground, leaving out the blue in coming forward, and lastly work up the foreground with brown Indian ink only. This operation may be repeated until the whole is sufficiently strong, marking the dark parts of the foreground as dark as the ink will make it—that is to say, the touches of the shadow in shade. Great care must be taken to leave out the blue gradually as the objects come forward, otherwise it will have a bad effect. Attention must also be given to the middle tints, that they are not marked too strong, which would make it, when coloured, look hard. The same grey colour, or aërial tint, may be first washed over every terrestrial part of the drawing required to be kept down—that is, before colouring—as colour laid over the grey will, of course, not be so light as when the paper is without it. The shadows and middle tints being worked up to a sufficient degree of power, colouring will be the next operation. This must be done by beginning in the distant parts, coming on stronger and stronger, colouring light and middle tint to the foreground, and lastly retouch the darker parts of the

foreground with Vandyke brown. Great caution will be required not to disturb the shadows with colour, otherwise the harmony of the whole will be destroyed, or, at any rate, not to do more than gently to colour the reflections." Such was the older method, the method in which the works of Webber, Sandby, and Cozens were wrought, but which was afterwards changed by Dayes, Girtin his pupil, and Turner, the rising genius who was to go beyond all who had preceded him in the practice of this delightful art.

The first to break away from the trammels of topography, and raise landscape painting in water colours to a branch of fine art, was Cozens. The materials for his life are very scanty, and we gather much of the following from Leslie's "Hand-book," his information being obtained from family connections of the painter. *John Cozens* was the son of Alexander Cozens, who was born in Russia, the natural son of Peter the Great by an Englishwoman whom the Czar took home with him from Deptford, and by whom he had another son, who became a general in the Russian service. The Emperor sent Alexander Cozens to Italy to study painting, from whence he came to England in 1746, where his son John was born in 1752. "I have seen," says Leslie, "a very small pen-drawing of three figures on which is written 'done by J. Cozens, 1761, when nine years old.' I have also seen a book of views in Italy, drawn in pencil, some finished with a pen, and others half finished in the manner of line engraving, on which is pasted the following memorandum: —'Alexander Cozens, in London, author of these drawings, lost them, and many more, in Germany, by their dropping from his saddle when he was riding on his way

from Rome to England in the year 1746. John Cozens, his son, being in Florence in the year 1776, purchased them. When he returned to London, in the year 1779, he delivered the drawings to his father.'" This was probably while the son was travelling in Italy with Mr. Beckford, for whom he wrought many of his best pictures, which were sold by auction at Christie's in 1805 —ninety-four in number. Edward Edwards tells us they were chiefly views in the neighbourhood of Rome and in other parts of Italy, and that at the sale they realized 510*l.* 4*s.* The same author notes that one of them sold for twenty guineas, as if this were a very large sum. About two years previous to his death, which Dayes tells us happened about 1796, John Cozens became a lunatic, and was supported by the generous humanity of Sir George Beaumont. Pilkington places his death in 1799.

His works go little beyond light and shade and the suggestion of colour, but they are full of poetry; there is a solemn grandeur in his Alpine views; a sense of vastness, and a tender tranquillity in his pictures that stamp him as a true artist; a master of atmospheric effects, he seems to have fully appreciated the value of mystery, leaving parts in his picture for the imagination of the spectator to dwell on and search into. Leslie well says that "pensive tenderness forms the charm of his evening scenes," that "he had an eye equally adapted to the grandeur, the elegance and the simplicity of nature, but loved best her gentlest, most silent eloquence." We learn also from him that Cozens' art made such an impression on Constable that, in a moment of enthusiastic admiration, he pronounced John Cozens to be "the greatest genius

that ever touched landscape;" but adds Leslie, "however we may be inclined to deduct from such an estimate, which may be considered as a mode of conveying a very high opinion rather than a deliberate verdict, we must suppose the possession of extraordinary powers by one who could be so characterized even without due reflection."

Cozens was one of our first water-colour painters who visited Italy, and he seemed thoroughly to have entered into the grander features of the country; he is best known by his Italian views; but there are some fine studies from trees in Windsor Forest painted by him. While he departed but slightly from the earlier method of tinted drawing, he made the first move in the right direction. The pigments he used were different from those named by Dayes; he compounded his cloud tints, and those of his distant mountains, of Indian red, a small portion of lake, indigo, and yellow ochre; in his middle distance, he blended a tint of black and burnt umber. His distant trees were tinted with the warm washes used for the sky, and those nearer with yellow ochre and indigo, enriched with burnt sienna; in the immediate foreground trees and shrubs, the same pigments are used with greater power. With such simple means he produced works which were thought worthy of being copied by Girtin and Turner, his great successors in the art—nor is this advance from topography to true poetry, from tinted drawings to the suggestion of local colour from the first *laying-in* of his drawings, all that Cozens achieved in advance of his predecessors. His works show that he was acquainted with the use of gentle washings, of abrasion of the surface to give atmosphere and distance, or to indicate sun-rays through intercepting clouds; and prove no less that

he was a true master of light and shade, and of the use of *accident* in painting.

We have searched the catalogues of the Royal Academy with great care, and find that John Cozens only exhibited there on one occasion. In 1776, when he was about twenty-four years of age, he sent "A Landscape, with Hannibal, in his March over the Alps, showing to his army the fertile plains of Italy." This is surmised to have been painted in oil, and must have been a work of rare excellence, since it is reported that Turner said he had learned more from it than anything he had seen. Where is now the picture? It is hardly to be wondered at that Cozens, who refrained from exhibiting, worked so largely for one patron, and was almost continually abroad, was so little known as an artist. How should the general public know anything of his works. This is or rather was the case with many others of our early water-colour painters; their names, their influence upon the Art, before the foundation of the Society of Painters in Water Colours, and their pictures, were almost wholly unknown. One or two private gentlemen had collected such works, but the first public recognition of the Art and its history was made at South Kensington, the small gift of water-colour paintings by Mr. Sheepshanks having formed the commencement of a national gallery of water-colour paintings, to which Mrs. Ellison, of Sudbrooke Park, has added fifty-one fine works by more modern artists, promising further contributions to the collection. Others have also handsomely contributed, and it is to be hoped a commencement has been made to rescue from oblivion examples tracing the early history of this national Art.

Another artist, who flourished in the latter half of

the eighteenth century, was *Paul Sandby, R.A.* Born at Nottingham in 1725, he lived into the succeeding century, and died in 1809. He has been called the father of water-colour Art, and certainly as contemporary with Taverner, an amateur, and Lambert, whom we have already mentioned; and as preceding Hearne, Rooker, Malton, Byrne, and Webber, by more than twenty years, he may claim that title by priority. As contrasted with Cozens, he was a man of ripe years when Cozens was an infant, yet he was essentially a topographic artist, and when in his later works his art seemed to touch the confines of poetry, the influence of Cozens may be traced. He was for many years drawing-master to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, and on the foundation of the Royal Academy was one of the original members. George III. employed him to give instruction in drawing to the royal children, and perhaps from this cause a large number of his works are scenes in the neighbourhood of Windsor and Eton. He painted both in body-colour, or, as works in this manner were then called, "water-colour," and made "tinted drawings." A fine specimen of the former will be found in the collection at South Kensington, No. 383, with many specimens of the latter; while there are a large number of his tinted drawings in the royal collections at Windsor. These drawings are simple in their general treatment of light and shade, and weak in colour; for Sandby seems never to have given up the early methods. They are more valuable for their accurate rendering of the various scenes than as works of Art.

William Payne, of whose history but little is at present known, is another artist of the period, and one to whom but scant justice has yet been done. He seems to have

been a native of Plymouth, as we find him in 1786 residing at Plymouth Dock, and, for the first time, contributing to the Royal Academy Exhibition five views of Plymouth and its neighbourhood. He continued to reside there during the years 1787–9, still contributing to the exhibition tinted drawings of Devonshire scenery. In 1790 Payne seems to have removed to London, and resided in Thornhaugh Street, Bedford Square. We find him this year again sending four Devonshire scenes to the exhibition, after which date his name entirely disappears from the catalogue. Reynolds is said to have expressed great admiration for some of Payne's Devonshire drawings, particularly of a drawing of the slate quarries at his native Plympton. Even these transcripts from nature were said to be entirely novel in their excellent treatment.

Payne adopted many peculiarities in his methods of execution, some of which are valuable additions to the art. He abandoned the use of outline with the pen. His general process was very simple. Having invented a grey tint (still known by the colourmen as Payne's grey), he used it for all the varied gradations of his middle distance, treating the extreme distance, as also the clouds and sky, with blue. For the shadow, in his foreground, he used Indian ink or lamp-black, breaking these colours into the distance by the admixture of grey. In this he but slightly differed from the other artists of his time, but his methods of handling were more peculiarly his own. These consisted in splitting the brush to give the forms of foliage, dragging the tints to give texture to his foregrounds, and taking out the forms of lights by wetting the surface and rubbing with bread or rag.

He seems to have been among the first who used this practice, which, in the hands of Turner, became such a powerful aid to effect, and enabled the early painters in water colour to refrain from using white or solid pigments in the lights.

Having thus prepared a vigorous light and shadow, Payne tinted his distance, middle distance, and foreground with colour, retouching and deepening the shadows in front to give power to his work, and even loading his colour and using gum plentifully. He sought to enrich scenes wherein he had attempted effects of sunset or sunrise, by passing a full wash of gamboge and lake over the completed drawing. He abandoned mere topography for a more poetical treatment of landscape scenery, and although he has none of the delicacy of Cozens, and rarely touches our sympathies, he set an example of what might be done, even in the simpler practice of "tinting," by accidental effects, by selection of forms, by sun-rays piercing through clouds which, like Cozens, he obtained by washing out, by mists and vapours, introducing such treatments into the practice of the art. Many of his works are of large size, and although occasionally very vacant and empty, and too often displaying great mannerism in handling, and little reference to nature, they yet served to lead the way for the abler men who followed. Time has acted unfavourably on his pictures; they have darkened considerably, partly from the foxy-brown to which the general wash has changed, and partly from the too great strength of the black in the foregrounds.

"Unfortunately for the reputation of the artist, '*Payne's style*' became corrupt merely from its becoming too common, being so rendered from the folly of fashion;

for so obviously simple and easily comprehensible was his process, that all the mammas in the land were eager to obtain him as the instructor of their daughters." Mr. Payne for some years derived a large income from teaching, but failing to refill and refresh his mind by studying from nature, he degenerated into the merest mannerist, and while the art was advancing on every side, not only stood still, but sank into weakness and inanity.

Another artist who aided in laying the foundation of our school of water-colour painting is *John Smith*. Born in 1750, we have but little record of his life and history, and have to trace his progress by his works. These, as they are mostly dated, enable us to compare him with his fellow-artists, and to see how much or how little he contributed to the general progress. Byron describes the difficulty Fame finds in registering the deeds of men who rejoice in like names with that of our artist:

> "Men of pith,
> Sixteen named Thompson, and nineteen named Smith."

And he that would follow the course of Smith's art in the catalogues and records of the day, will find it difficult to make choice of the right man. He will find Smiths with prefixes of half the letters of the alphabet, besides having to choose between Smiths of Chichester and Smiths of Derby, Smith of Warwick, and "Warwick" Smith. A somewhat careful examination of the catalogues of the Academy has not enabled us to trace our Smith as an exhibitor; and Dayes, in his slight historical sketches of artists, does not notice him. He is said to have travelled in Italy with or for the Earl of Warwick, and thus to have acquired the cognomen of "Warwick" Smith. Six of his Italian sketches, varying in dates between 1786 and

1795, are to be found in the South Kensington collection, presented by Sir Walter Trevelyan, and one large drawing, dated in 1803, is in the same collection.

The earliest drawings of the six, 1786–7, are pure tinted drawings, differing little from the general practice of the artists of that period. In those of 1793–5 there is an advance in the use, in parts, of local colour without a first preparation of grey, and in the enrichment of the foreground and middle distance, by shadows of the local colour of the objects when in shade. All these works are elegant and fresh, but as compositions differ little from the best Italian tempera drawings of that time or of the period immediately preceding, and show none of the novelties of execution—the endeavours by new processes of various kinds, to achieve a closer relation to Nature. Yet Smith's contemporaries said that he tinted his works almost to the force of oil-painting; and Gainsborough is related to have remarked that "he was the first water-colour painter who carried his intention through;" high praise from one so capable of judging, and made upon a larger view of his works than has fallen to our share. A writer in 1808, in the "*Review of Publications of Fine Art*," says of him, that "he is the father of the system of colouring on paper, which at present prevails almost universally;" and adds, "we have heard, and indeed there are those among us who know, that Mr. John Smith first discovered and taught the junior artists the rationale of tempering their positive colours with the neutral grey formed by the mixture of red, blue, and yellow: that this grey, constituted of all the primary colours, would harmonize with any, and form a common bond of concord with all, and that, tempered

with a little more or less of warm or cool colours, as time, or climate, or season might require, it became the air tint, or negative colour of the atmosphere which intervened between the eye and the several objects of the landscape."

This is the manner, we presume, in which Smith executed, in 1803, his "View in the Val D'Aosta," now in the South Kensington collection. This large picture is a studio work, and has none of the freshness of nature, or of his own earlier tinted drawings; the general colour is a neutral brown-yellow, or brown-green; the shadows of the trees, foreground, &c., have the grey mingled with the local colour, an advance on the former method; the lights of the foliage are largely taken out, and there is an evident attempt to work in the new manner succinctly described by Dayes, who, after explaining the practice of tinting which we have already transcribed, says, the other method is "by dead-colouring the drawing all over, making light, shade, and middle tint, as is done in oil-painting (only preserving the lights), and which is of course the most complex, and so proceed, strengthening each part, until the whole is finished." This is a short, but clear, account of the new method of commencing without the grey ground, and laying in the whole with local colours first, heightening and finishing with the local colour of the shadow, a method which had by this time made great progress in the hands of Turner and of Dayes' pupil, Girtin; so that it would appear Smith was behind, rather than in advance of, the practice of the young and rising artists of the beginning of the century. He died in 1812.

We have traced thus far the progress of water-

colour painting from its topographic founders, through the changes they introduced into their practice, until, in the hands of Smith, Payne, and Cozens, it rose into a truly poetical art. Still, even as practised by these men, many of the weaknesses of its early condition clung to it; and it was reserved to the artists of whom we have yet to write, to give the utmost force of colour, light and shade, and chiaroscuro, as well as the truest effects of atmosphere, of delicate fulness of detail, combined with breadth and richness such as had hitherto been considered possible only in oil-painting, and to combine these qualities with true poetic feeling, ranging over every variety of subject.

Thomas Girtin was the first to give a full idea of the *power* of water-colour painting; the first wholly to change the practice of the art, to achieve in this medium richness and depth of colour, with perfect clearness and transparency, and the utmost boldness and facility of execution; the first who followed out a procedure the reverse of that which had hitherto prevailed—laying in the whole of his work with the true local colour of the various parts, and afterwards adding the shadows with their own local and individual tints. Girtin was born in Southwark, on the 18th of February, 1773, so that, like his rival, Turner, he was a native of the metropolis, and grew in art under its truly picturesque influences. Like most other children, he early evinced a great predilection for drawing, and covered every scrap of paper that came to hand with his boyish fancies; but as he himself said that "other boys of his own age, ten or twelve, who amused themselves or idled in the same way, drew as well as himself," we may be assured that there was nothing very marked in these childish efforts. The real

point is, that he followed up earnestly his first boyish aspirations, and as he advanced in years, continued to apply himself to copying prints and drawings wherever he could obtain them. We do not learn how or when he became acquainted with Dr. Munro, but to this acquaintance he was indebted for good examples to study, for companionship with some of the rising youths of the day, and for sound advice as to the practice of the art he soon resolved to follow.

Dr. Munro, who then lived in the Adelphi Terrace, inherited from his father a valuable and extensive collection of drawings by Marlowe, Gainsborough, Hearne, Sandby, Rooker, Cozens, and others, and being himself a sincere lover of art, who had known most of these painters in his youth, he had greatly added to his inherited collection. Towards the end of the last century, he opened his house and his well-filled folios to the young artists of the day. Girtin, Turner, Francia, Varley, Edridge, and others gladly availing themselves of this privilege, attended at his house on stated evenings, to make copies and studies of the choice works he possessed, aided by the remarks of the doctor, who from his intimacy with the older artists, was well able to speak as to the methods they employed, their various pigments, and the modes of using them.

Dr. Munro also encouraged the young artists to sketch from Nature, and to bring their sketches and work them into pictures at these evening meetings. Studies for their pencils abounded everywhere on the shores of the river his house overlooked. Among others, the ruins of the old Savoy palace furnished many subjects for them; and Girtin said that a study he made of the

old steps of this ruined palace, was a lesson from which he dated all the future knowledge which he displayed in the pictorial representation of ruined masonry. Here he studied detail carefully, in order to treat it afterwards with breadth. Girtin and Turner were well aware that the labour of the mind is higher than that of the hand, and that "it is not in the scene itself, however great, or however beautiful, that the merit of a picture consists; it is in the manner of treating it." This axiom was a new one in water-colour art, which had commenced in exact delineation, ignoring any particular mode of viewing scenery. From Southwark, as he journeyed up the stream, Girtin found ample studies on either shore of the river. There was the ruined palace of the Bishops of Winchester—the rude and irregular piles of wharves—the kilns, and long shore erections of Lambeth and Westminster—the grey old palace—the windmills on either bank—the picturesque village of Chelsea, with its fine trees bordering the river, and the view across the water to the heights of Wandsworth. Many of these subjects have already been destroyed, but Chelsea still lingers, a curious relic of a past age. The trees still hang over its wharf-wall, the old brick church still blocks up the way, the houses stand across the main road—doomed perhaps soon to fall before the hand of the improver—the barrow and spade of the navvy coming up slowly, yet surely, to destroy all that remains of the past. Then with what moving life the river was peopled; the fisherman still plied his trade—the apprentice lived night and day in the little peter-boat—the large Medway barge, piled up with hay and straw, navigated the stream with its brown or ochreous sail—the long canal boat,

the floating rafts of timber—all these picturesque objects were there. And as the youths assembled in the rooms of Munro, looked from the window, the setting sun shed its last rays in the west to lighten into poetry the common-places of every-day life—to dye the broad sail with a more wondrous orange—to dim with the golden haze of evening the tumble-down wharves and rude dwellings of the opposite shore—and to reflect them in the ample bosom of the full-tide stream.

Girtin, in his young days, had taken drawing lessons from one Fisher, of Aldersgate Street; later in life he was placed for a time to study Art under Edward Dayes, partly a topographer, partly an engraver,—a man who knew well the general principles of Art, and drew the figure passably well, but had little of the genius of his pupil, whose rapid progress made the teacher jealous, and unwilling to admire works so different and so superior to his own. Girtin early extended his journeys to the picturesque towns and villages around London. He also visited St. Alban's, Peterborough, York, Durham, sketching the churches, cathedrals, and ruins—subjects in which he took great delight. He then visited the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland, made some excursions into Scotland and Wales, both north and south, and soon began to treat mountain and lake scenery in a manner very different to that of his predecessors. Restrained, we are told, by none of the fancied limitations and incapabilities of water-colours, he at once struck out a daring style, determined to imitate what he saw; and perceiving that heavy overhanging clouds threw the vast mass of a mountain which occupied the whole distance, under a deep and solemn mass of gloom,

he dared to imitate it in his picture, and thereby produced a work full of sublimity, and stamped with the originality that had struck him in Nature. One of the writers of the day, who gives us a fact or two which we have embodied in this notice, tells us that "Girtin usually finished the greater part of his drawing on the spot." We have no doubt that his less important works and his studies were wrought in this way; but that his finest works should be, is inconsistent with the daring effects of cloud and storm, of gloom and the solemn massing of objects, embodied in his best pictures. Where, but in his own studio, after deep observation on the spot, could such works have been produced? Indeed, we have a better authority for the fact. One who had frequently watched his progress, tells us that "his finely coloured compositions were wrought with much study, and proportionate manual exertion;" and that though he did not hesitate, nor undo what he had once done, for he worked on principle, yet he reiterated his tints to produce "splendour and richness, and repeated his depths to secure transparency of tones, with a perseverance that would surprise those who were not intimately acquainted with the difficult process in water-colour painting necessary to produce works that merit the designation of pictures." He resolutely suppressed details, seeking for breadth and largeness of parts, qualities difficult to achieve in the presence of Nature.

When fully settled in the practice of his art we find him drawing chiefly on cartridge paper of a rough surface and low tone of colour, choosing this material to work on for the scope it gave to his largeness of manner and omission of details, as well as for its low

tone which accorded with the phase of nature he most loved to delineate. It has been well remarked that associating with Turner, working much with him at Dr. Munro's house, and ever in emulous but friendly rivalry, it is curious how markedly unlike are the works of the two painters; the direction of Turner's art in water colours was rather towards light, and the effects of light and atmosphere; that of Girtin to largeness of parts, generalization, and gloomy grandeur. Yet Girtin, like Turner, was fond of painting picturesque ruins of abbeys, castles, and cathedrals, which he worked with an atmosphere and effect congenial to the subject and peculiarly his own. One who writes "with the confidence of contemporary observation," relates that Girtin having sketched a picturesque part of an ancient town, and drawn the outline in broad daylight, proposed to colour the scene as it then appeared, "but in passing near the spot at the going down of the sun, and perceiving that the buildings under the influence of twilight had assumed so unexpected a mass of shadow on the fading light of the sky, and that the reflexions in the water still increased the vastness of the mass; moreover that the arches opposed their distinct forms, dark also, to a bright gleam of the horizon; he was so possessed with the solemn grandeur of the composition, which had gained so much in sentiment by the change of light, that he determined to make an attempt at imitation, and by ardent application accomplished the object. The piece was wrought with bold and masterly execution, and led to the daring style of effect which he subsequently practised with so much success in certain of his works."

Girtin was fond of contrasting cool shadows with warm

and brilliant lights spread over the picturesque ruins in which he delighted, giving by these means an appearance of sunshine and a splendour of effect startling to those who had been accustomed to the tamer manner of the topographers or even to the poetical tenderness of the works of Cozens. His picture of "Rivaulx Abbey" in Yorkshire, painted in 1798, the time of his best art, is an example of this kind, and is now in the South Kensington Museum. It is a large drawing for that period, about 16 inches by 21 inches, and is on very rough cartridge; in this work he has not wholly departed from the tinting method, as some of the broad shadows have been first laid on with a pure blue-grey, contrasted with rich Roman ochre in the lights; the mastery and power of the execution is quite wonderful, and justifies what Lewis the landscape painter used to say of the "sword-play of Girtin's pencil"—the hand-stroke of the brush clear, clean, and decisive—no detail and not the slightest finesse—except in the extreme harmony of the boldly opposed tints painted cleanly and sharply up to one another, as is shown in the cool tints of the sky against the clear warmth of the abbey walls in the drawing we are describing.

Girtin washed-in his skies with a mixture of indigo and lake, and the shadows of his clouds with light red and indigo, or Indian red and indigo. The warm tone of the cartridge paper served for the lights, and was enhanced by being opposed to the azure, and to the cool tints of the clouds. It is said that the wire-marked cartridge he loved to work on was only to be obtained at a stationer's at Charing Cross, and was folded in quires. As the half sheet was not large enough for his

purpose he had to spread out the sheet, and the crease of the folding, being at times more absorbent than the other parts of the paper, a dark blot was caused across the sky, and indeed across the whole picture in many of his works. This defect was at first tolerated on account of the great originality and merit of his works, and gradually gave a higher value to those in which it occurred, being considered a proof of their originality. The "View on the Wharfe," also in the South Kensington Museum, is on this paper, but there is only a very slight appearance of the crease. For his light stone tints, Girtin used thin washes of Roman ochre, laid on tolerably wet, adding light red ochre and lake to vary the effect; for brick buildings he used burnt sienna, madder brown, and lake with the ochres, at times contrasting these warm tints with indigo and even with pure ultramarine. These oppositions of warm and cold tints, carried out in perfect harmony by Girtin, in the hands of his imitators—and like every man of genius he of course had many—led to a story of his old master Dayes, which we shall relate after having given some account of the rest of his palette.

For finishing the foreground when the local colour was to be represented with the fullest force, Girtin used Vandyke brown and Cologne earth. His greens, which were mostly very negative, were composed of gamboge, indigo, and burnt sienna, the two latter predominating. Occasionally he gave the fullest richness, by yellow-lake, brown-pink and Prussian blue, shading the trees with indigo and burnt sienna, and adding, in the most neutral parts, a beautiful and harmonious shadow tint, composed of grey and madder brown, which, mingling at times with the indigo and burnt sienna, gave great harmony,

and kept up that feeling of "tone" which is so marked a quality in his pictures. Girtin made his greys sometimes with Venetian red and indigo, or Indian red and indigo, and a series of harmonious warm and cool greys with Roman ochre, indigo, and lake, mixed in varied degrees—this is a little in accordance with the manner adopted by Smith—indeed it was only quite at the end of Girtin's career that he wrought his pictures partly on the oil method of laying in the local colours without any grey shadows.

Our account of Girtin and his works enables us to fix his place in the history of water-colour art. His picture of "Rivaulx Abbey," above commented upon, does not give us a full idea of the poetry with which he treated such subjects. It simply shows the ruins under the best effects of sunlight—without those accidents of storm and cloud, of twilight or gloomy eve, which he loved and treated so well; but it does fully show his mode of execution, and enables us to say that he did not add much to the resources of art in this direction. A full and flowing pencil, a power of appreciating the exact tones which harmonize with each other, and the best effect to suit his subject, he certainly had—and from him his companions learnt how much these qualities added to the interest of the picture; but his work is as coarse and strong as it is vigorous: we trace few or none of the new executive processes—the delicate washings of Cozens—the dragging, and the taking out of lights by Payne—or the finesse of broken tints that even at this very time distinguished his rival Turner. "Rivaulx Abbey" was painted in 1798; in 1799, Turner exhibited the fine picture of "Warkworth Castle," now in the Ellison collection at

South Kensington. In this picture we already perceive the use of most of the new executive processes so largely conducive to the effects afterwards produced by the new school —such as the laying in masses of colour while the paper is kept in a moist state; soft washings of the sky and distance, and taking out lights, interchanged with tints laid in wet, clean, and sharp; and also the new treatment of shading the parts with the local colour of the object in shadow after the general colour had been first laid; so that we rather attribute this advance to Turner than to Girtin. Girtin had but one manner, and that he had nearly perfected when he died; and it is just possible that had he lived to be popular he might have become somewhat of a *chiqueur;* indeed his use of cartridge, and more especially his indifference to, nay, even affectation in parading, what was really a blot upon his work, shows the spirit of a mannerist, a spirit very likely to grow upon a man when he finds even his faults magnified into beauties.

Girtin's success, the bold and vigorous manner in which he wrought, the unrivalled ease and mastery of his touch, made a great impression on the public. His instruction was much sought after, and reams of paper covered with splashes of Vandyke brown, Roman ochre, and indigo blue. The artists of the day also sought to imitate his style. We are even told that Francia produced many spurious Girtins; and others far less able than Francia made coarse compositions, opposing hot and cold colours with a crudity and harshness that rendered the school and the style for a time distasteful. Apropos to this we find the story, to which we have just referred, related in the *Somerset House Gazette,* in 1824. The writer says, "Poor Dayes, the

preceptor of Girtin, in temper 'neither amiable nor happy,' could never forgive his disciple for becoming so mightily his superior in art. If a severe critique had been wanting on the defects of his style, Dayes, who had a most caustic wit, would have written it *con amore* for the first or worst journal that offered. Once—it was but a short period before his envied pupil's decease—Dayes happened to call on a collector of drawings (an old drivelling *dilettante*, who patronized every dashing style), and saw a smart portfolio, inscribed in gold letters with the name of one of Girtin's closest imitators. 'What have we here?' said Dayes. 'They are some works of a pupil of your old disciple,' said the collector. 'Pray, Mr. Dayes, look at them, and favour me with your opinion.' Dayes untied the portfolio, and on beholding the first subject, which was a large drawing of a mountainous scene among the lakes in Cumberland, he exclaimed, in his emphatic manner, 'O ye gods! the blue bag—the blue bag!' Dayes was a man of quick discernment, and very pointed in his remarks. Nothing could be more characteristic of the drawing, indeed of the whole collection. The collector laughed immoderately. Dayes, encouraged by this first essay of his wit, proceeded, commenting most ludicrously on each drawing as it came to view, still making the burden of his song, 'Oh, the blue bag!' 'So,' said he, 'because Master Tom chooses to wash in dirty water, ergo this puppy, this ass, this driveller, and the rest of the herd, forsooth, must wash in dirty water too. Yes, by the Lord! and with the very puddle water he has made more dirty! ha! ha! ha!' Adding, with amazing volubility, 'Dietrich begat Cassanova; Cassanova begat De Louther-

bourg, Loutherbourg begat Sir Frankey Bourgeois; and he, the dirty dog, quarrelled with Nature, and bedaubed her works.' Certainly the master did not love the pupil. When Dayes published his professional sketches, Girtin had been dead some two years—time enough to have sobered down the memory of his faults, and for the teacher to dwell on the merits rather than the defects of his former pupil; but Dayes gives only twelve lines of his recollections of one so eminent in his own art, and ten of these are devoted to a caution against Girtin's errors; all he really has to say of his art being, that "though his drawings are generally too slight, yet they must ever be admired as the offspring of a strong imagination. Had he not trifled away a vigorous constitution, *he might* have arrived at a very high degree of excellence as a landscape painter."

As other writers beside Dayes speak of Girtin's intemperance and irregularity, we fear there must be some cause for censure. Yet there are those who treat the matter more lightly, telling us that he was shy, and rather sought the company of his inferiors than of the cultivated and well-bred; and this not, as in Morland's case, because he loved low society, but because he felt more at his ease, and could indulge his leisure in idleness. Thus, in travelling to the North, he would take his passage in a collier, and delight to live in common with the crew, eating salt-beef, smoking and drinking grog with them, enjoying their rough jokes and noisy songs. And in his country journeys, the kitchen of the little road-side inn was sought by him in preference, where he found subjects and characters suited to his feeling of the picturesque. Latterly, his evenings

were frequently passed at the house of one Harris, a frame-maker, in Gerrard Street, Soho, where Morland also frequently resorted. This Harris was a dealer in drawings, and knew well his advantage in having two such men in his keeping, as he made much money by both of them; for Girtin, like his companion, rather inclined to sell his works through a dealer than to those who wished to possess them. He is said to have been of a kind and friendly disposition—known as honest Tom Girtin amongst his associates, and quite ready to tell whatever he knew in art to whoever sought his assistance and advice. For two or three winters before his death he belonged to a "Sketching Society;" probably the precursor of the one that existed almost to our own day, and having rules nearly similar. No society could have been more respectable; and it would seem to show that if his habits *had* been loose and intemperate, he was in a fair way of improvement.

In his twenty-third year he painted a panorama of London, as seen from the roof of the Albion flour-mills, which is said to have been much admired; though Leslie laments that any portion of so short and valuable a life as Girtin's should have been wasted on so transient a work. After Girtin's death the panorama was sold to a Russian nobleman, who took it to his own country. According to some accounts it was previously exhibited in Castle Street, Leicester Square, but as others say, in Spring Gardens, and was on view at the time of his death. His health broke down, we know not from what cause, and at the short peace in 1802 he was advised to visit Paris with a view to its restoration; his complaint was on the lungs—asthma, or consumption, for accounts differ.

Feeling lonely while in Paris, he occupied himself by making above twenty sketches of buildings and views in that city; these on his return he etched on soft ground, and had the effect laid in from his drawings in aqua-tint. He also painted two scenes from his Paris views for Covent Garden Theatre. Thus striving against illness, and energetic to the last, we find this man charged with intemperate habits, doing enough to wear out one of sound health; but whether paying the penalty of past errors, or of overwrought strength, his disease became hopeless, and he died at his lodgings in the Strand, at one Norman's, a frame-maker.

He was buried in the churchyard of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, where a stone was shortly after erected—"To the memory of Thomas Girtin, artist, who departed this life November 9, 1802." Girtin had a brother, a writing engraver, named John, who, some years subsequent to the death of the artist, lived in Castle Street, Leicester Square, where he had the misfortune to have his house and stock-in-trade destroyed by fire. Many works of the painter are said to have then perished. Before Girtin's early death he had married, and had one son, who is now a surgeon at Islington; he possesses many of his father's works, and is a diligent collector of all that come within his means. Several fine drawings from his collection were shown in the International Exhibition of 1862. The original drawings made in Paris were in the possession of the Earl of Essex.

Thus we have seen that to the poetry of the art, as practised by Cozens, Girtin added power—power of effect, power of colour and tone, power of execution. "Sobered tints of exquisite truth and broad chiaroscuro," says

Leslie, "are his prevailing characteristics;" but as we have remarked, his strength wanted refinement and delicacy—wanted range and variety, qualities which it was left to his friend and companion Turner to supply. Girtin died just as he was rising into eminence—just as he was about to prove whether he had or had not resources beyond those he had already exhibited. Turner was destined to live and to become a landscape painter, both in water colour and oil, such as the world had hardly yet seen; as such we shall have a long chapter to devote to him in the history of Art, and it is only to show his relation to the progress of painting in water colours that we give him space in this.

We are told that during Girtin's short career his works were astonishingly numerous, yet we are unacquainted with any such treasury of sketches as we possess even of the early days of Turner. Turner seems to have lived with the pencil in his hand, and has left us sketches in every stage of art-expression, from a few hasty lines drawn and eked out by written notes, to works which, from another artist, would have been thought highly-finished pictures. Many date the perfect development of water-colour painting from Girtin, but it is far more due to Turner, who, while he could paint in that medium with the power and strength of Girtin, added to that strength delicacy and *quality*. This is seen in the picture of Warkworth Castle already alluded to, as well as in other pictures *prior* to 1802. Turner was in Edinburgh about 1801, as he exhibited in 1802 a water-colour painting of "The New Town, Castle, &c., from the Water of Leith," the companion to the "View of Edinburgh from the Calton Hill," exhibited in 1804. He

was on the Continent in the interim, and it is most probable that both were worked upon together. It is some years since we saw the first picture, and unfortunately we have no notes of it; but the second was undoubtedly executed within a few months after Girtin's death, if not in his lifetime, and shows the wide divergence of the two artists in their executive processes, as well as in the principles of their art, and the vastly superior aim of Turner. Moreover, it almost entirely settles the question as to which of the two we owe the many new and effective processes that about this time added so much to the effect of water-colour painting. The last-mentioned picture is on wire-laid paper, but far from having painted it at once, and with a full body of tint, as Girtin would have painted it, Turner has laid on his cool tints first, retaining so much of the earlier manner as suited him, and has resorted to washing and renewing the masses; scraping off the colour when in a fluent state, as in the roads; cutting off a surface of the paper to obtain a pure light, as in the figures on the hill; removing masses in the clouds and sky by damping and rubbing; breaking up the monotony of masses by infinitely delicate repetitions of tints, as in the old town and in the distance. All these executive processes are but accessories to the grandest breadth and largest treatment of the parts, and are employed with all the resources which art-knowledge gives to aid the painter in the fullest expression of his idea.

Turner, early in his water-colour practice, realized a new and a great truth in art, and this he afterwards carried out in his oil pictures also. Others had tried to give the true effect of light by sacrificing the shadows,

hence the heavy forced shadows of even the otherwise truthful Dutchmen, and the rule, adopted almost as a law, of making the foregrounds dark. Turner on the contrary sought to give the true colour of shadows, and of objects in shadow, and as we have but a confined range between the pigments representing light and dark, he had necessarily in a degree to sacrifice his lights; and was continually endeavouring to increase their brightness and breadth, and by this means to make his gradations as infinitesimal as possible. In the oil paintings of his middle and last time this is especially seen; in his water-colours after he had once obtained the mastery of his means, it is always evident.

Thus though somewhat younger than Girtin, Turner was really a-head of him in art, an opinion which was held by his contemporaries also; for before Girtin died, Turner had already been elected both an associate and an academician, and must have owed the former distinction at least, to his works in water-colours.

In his sketches, properly studied, we may trace not only Turner's progress, but Turner's processes and his art-principles. With Girtin and others, we find him assiduously copying the works of Hearne, Cozens, and Sandby, in those evening meetings at Dr. Munro's. Under Malton, himself a clever topographic artist, Turner studied perspective, and studied it thoroughly; we know that Malton was well qualified to teach even such a pupil as Turner, and this teaching perhaps led the pupil in after life to accept the professorship of perspective at the Royal Academy. As soon, however, as Turner had passed his pupilage, as soon as he began to see and study nature for himself, he not only gave up the tinting method which

he had thus learned, and adopted the practice of laying in his pictures with the local colour first, but he adopted it in a manner wholly his own—a manner whose gradual development, until it arrived at full perfection, is to be studied in his sketches, better even than in his finished pictures.

His practice seems to have been to lay in his warm and cool colours opposed to each other in general masses; beginning with delicate and transparent washes, repeating them with slight variations of the local colour, as seen in light or in shade, to break up the masses and give variety and texture, yet still preserving great transparency in his early painting, and paying attention to little more than the merest generalities of form. Sometimes, when the masses of light and cool colour had been somewhat advanced, he washed, or otherwise abraded the surface of his paper, and then wrought out the details of form on this surface by luminous shadows varied according to the general hue of the mass, as light or dark, warm or cold; gradually by such means feeling out, with extreme delicacy, the minor forms and details, until these were sufficiently pronounced for their position, either as distance, mid-distance, or foreground. By such means, while he kept up the transparency of his work, he achieved endless variety, delicate gradations, great breadth, and great atmosphere in his pictures; and in all stages of their progress, the general effect was at the same time maintained.

Of course this power was not obtained at once. We see in his early works a gradual transition from tinted drawings to local colouring, and thence, by gradual advances, to the method above described. As Turner

arrived at perfect knowledge and perfect mastery, he adopted or invented new means to perfect his surfaces and give quality and texture; such as damping the masses of colour, and cleansing them of irregularities by picking or blotting portions of the tint, or sharpening the edges of light and giving forms of foliage, buildings or figures, by taking out lights with bread, or damp rag. Again by wetting dark masses of tint, and when in a wet state, by scraping out lights with a bluntish knife; cutting out sharp lights from the surface of the paper, to give broad high lights on white drapery, buildings, or animals, or the glistening and sun-lighted edges of leaves; stippling to flatten and give breadth to skies and distances; or to neutralize and harmonize colour by juxtaposition of hues and tints. Turner used no white or opaque pigments in his pictures; yet no one knew better than he did the value and use of white, for he used it freely in sketching from Nature, and in studying his pictures, either on a very delicate greyish tint, on a darker greyish blue paper, on cartridge paper, or even on white paper, of which there are numerous examples at South Kensington. Many of his fine studies of skies are so treated, and whenever he sought great rapidity, he freely used white; but in his finished pictures he purposely avoided it, even to the end of his career.

At a meeting where many water-colour painters were present, Mr. Horsley, R.A., was exclaiming against the injurious practice of Harding and others, who, by the use of white and opaque pigments, were bringing about a total change in a beautiful art. He was joined by the late Mr. Munro of Novarre, who, having accidentally overheard him, supported his remarks by saying:—"I am glad

to hear your remarks, Mr. Horsley. Turner himself was of the same opinion; he declared to me that water-colour painting would be totally ruined, and lose all its individuality and beauty by the bad practice of mingling opaque with transparent colour." This anecdote supports the result we have arrived at from the examination of his works, and shows that on principle he avoided the use of solid pigments. By the removal of the surface of his paper Turner obtained all the advantages arising from the use of white, without the danger of losing the transparency and harmony of tone supplied by the creamy colour of the paper, and sometimes lost by the careless or improper use of white. In his small but beautiful picture of Hornby Castle, now in the South Kensington Museum, it is difficult to believe that white has not been laid on for the high lights of the figures and cattle in the foreground on the right, such is the apparent impasto and fulness of effect; and it is only by observing the perfect unity of tone between the figures and the other parts of the picture, that the casual observer will be satisfied that such is not the case.

Landscape and figure painting in tempera or body colour were practised both by our own countrymen and foreigners side by side with tinted drawings, as may be seen in the National Collection in the works of Taverner, Zuccarelli, Hackeart, and Paul Sandby; the latter continued to paint in tempera almost to the end of the last century—as in the Drawing dated 1794 No. 383, National Collection,—tinting drawings also at the same time, and as long as he continued to practise his art. Yet no one seems to have thought of mingling the two methods, or for some time of the possibility, in trans-

parent colours, of laying in the local tints first, and afterwards defining the lights and shadows, as did the tempera painters. The tempera painter continued to the end to ignore his white ground (the paper), and to lay in his work solidly, even to the sky, overlooking the possibility of mingling the two, as is done so effectively in the present day; while the transparent painter probably felt that such practice was inconsistent with the purity and beauty of transparent painting. Although the miniature painters had set an example in their continued practice of such admixture, it was only by slow degrees that any addition of body colours took place; in fact, tempera painting had to die out entirely, and the use of many expedients was then adopted to supply the means of adding the lights after the local tints, which might have been dispensed with, had not the union of body colour with transparent painting been thought objectionable in the early practice of the new art.

It will be perceived that we estimate Turner's influence on the progress of water-colour painting as far greater than Girtin's, or of any of his predecessors; yet while we give Turner the highest place, both for art and execution, we cannot credit even him with the invention or first use of all the processes which he so successfully adopted in landscape painting, and which have so greatly added to the resources of the rising school. We opened this chapter with an account of the miniature painters, and their methods of working, derived from a long ancestry. In their practice we have seen that many, if not all, those executive means had been long in use; among others, even that which

produced the great change in the art from tinting to water-colour painting, namely, the laying in the subject from the first with its local colours.

This branch of art, at the time Girtin and Turner were progressing together in landscape, numbered many clever men—such as Hamilton, Shelley, Westall, and others; men who did not practise merely miniature painting in water colours, but painted subjects from history or poetry consisting of single figures or groups, wherein the use of the local colour from the first—washing, stippling, and even the addition of white or 'body colour—were part of the method employed. A figure of Eve, in the South Kensington Museum, by Hamilton, R.A., who died in 1801, is rich and full of colour, the shadows being hatched in over the local colour of the flesh. Again, R. Westall, R.A., born in 1765, was ten years older than either Turner or Girtin, and had practised as a miniature and figure painter for many years before they effected the change of manner in landscape art. His works also were rich and full in colour, and of great beauty of execution, as we learn by the following anecdote. We are told that he took some of them to Northcote to ask his advice, and that, after attentively examining them, Northcote exclaimed, "Why, this is something new in art. How do'ee do it? I did not believe that water-colour could be brought to this perfection. Why, young man, these are the most beautiful specimens of the art I have seen. I would give the world to do such things." From which we may infer that it was the rich quality of the works, joined to delicacy of execution, that pleased the pupil of Sir Joshua.

Moreover, many of the oil painters wrought in

water colours certainly with more richness and colour than the topographers. We have heard of, but not seen, works in this medium, by Wright of Derby; some by Gainsborough, which we have seen, were far in advance of the tinted drawings of the day, and may have lent suggestions towards the change of practice. Thus we have traced painting in water colours from mere topography, until it took its true rank as Fine Art. Fresh and untrammelled, free to adopt or to reject the traditions of old schools and old masters, born from the imitation of Nature, and deriving its best inspiration from the same source, it was in a fair way to become, as it speedily did become, an important school in this country. In a future chapter we shall enter upon the history of the art when its professors became numerous, and when its rivalry with oil led to combinations among those who practised it, to secure for the new art its fair presentation before the public.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SCHOOL OF MINIATURE PAINTERS.

Our First Miniaturists—Great Excellence of their Art—Its High Estimation—Painting on Ivory and in Enamel—Petitot—Flatman—Alexander Browne—Lewis Crosse—Boit—Bernard Lens—Zincke—Deacon—Jarvis Spencer—Michael Moser, R.A., and his Clever Daughter—Nathaniel Hone, R.A.—Collins of Bath—Shelley—Nixon—Sheriff—Ozias Humphrey, R.A.—Richard Cosway, R.A.—His Abilities and Rapid Progress—Style of Art—Vanity and Absurd Pretensions—His Wife a Clever Artist—Their Luxurious Style of Living—She Abandons him—His Mad Eccentricities and Death—Henry Bone, R.A.—Commences Life as a China Painter—Tries Enamel—His Success and Patronage—Henry Edridge, A.R.A.—Description of his Art—Both in Portrait and Landscape—Andrew Robertson—His long-sustained Eminence—Alfred Chalon, R.A.—His Family—Studies Art—His Bold Manner and Varied Powers—Sir W. Ross, R.A.—His Art and Distinguished Patronage—Loss of Miniature Art—Photography.

In describing, in the first chapter, the rise of Art in England, we pointed to our miniature painters as the first native artists who attained eminence, and instanced Nicholas Hilliard, in the reign of Elizabeth, followed by Isaac and Peter Oliver, John Hoskyns, and, later, Samuel Cooper, as highly distinguished in this favourite art; and we have in the preceding chapter described the processes of the early miniaturists in relation to the origin of water-colour painting. English art, in fact, began in portraiture. We trace, in its earliest efforts, the desire which has always existed to possess such remembrances as art could supply to gratify love, affection, or to retain

the memory of great and distinguished men. Our public collections, our old family mansions, are rich with these treasures; and even the most homely dwelling is rarely without some such memento. Portrait painters have always found ample employment in England. Foreign artists have resorted here and amassed large fortunes by portraiture; and from the demands upon it, the art came to be practised in a manner which rendered it almost a manufacture. From the establishment of exhibitions portraits have found no diminution; and where regulations have been made for their exclusion, they have crept in under assumed names — simpering as shepherdesses, or frowning in mock dignity as poesied heroines. Loud cries have been raised against their shameless prominence in honoured places on exhibition walls; but they are not to be dispossessed.

We are far, however, from concurring in the sweeping denunciations by which portraiture has been assailed; for to a really fine portrait—but how rare such a work! —we would give, as it merits, the most honoured preference. In the aspirations for high art, our great portrait painters have been contemned as mere face painters and money makers, and taunted with the saying of Kneller, when expressing his preference for portraiture over historic art, "I paint the living, and they make me live." Yet their art is of the highest, and a portrait, which, possessing fine technical art qualities, also portrays the refinements of mind and character, not a mere map of the features, is a work of the noblest aim. Of the value of such Walpole says, "A portrait of real authenticity we know is truth itself, and calls up so many collateral ideas as to fill an intelligent mind, more

than any other species of painting. Historical painting has more of imagination only." And Dr. Johnson sympathetically exclaims, "I should grieve that the art were transferred to heroes and goddesses, to empty splendour and airy fiction, which is now employed in diffusing friendship, in reviving tenderness, in awakening the affections of the absent, and continuing the presence of the dead." Miniature, perhaps, lends itself more to the affections than any other class of art. Cultivated since the days of Elizabeth no other has, to our time, found such steady encouragement. Its intrinsic beauty and elaborate finish are charms which address themselves at once to all, and all can comprehend and esteem its merits. The cherished miniature may be a constant companion: it may serve as a personal adornment worn as a locket, brooch, or bracelet; or, when all took snuff, might be always present on the lid of the snuff-box. Yet, when fatally united with settings of diamonds and other precious stones, and once separated from the affections which prized it above these adjuncts, they only contributed to its ruin; and despoiled of its jewelled settings, its fragile beauty was soon exposed to destruction. Such has been the fate of numerous works we should now prize more for their art than for their former costly ornamentation.

It is not our purpose to include here as miniaturists those artists, briefly mentioned in the following chapter, who in early times drew highly-finished heads of a small size in pencil, or with the pen and slightly washed in with Indian ink, usually on vellum; but to consider the term miniature as strictly applying to portraits executed in water colours on ivory, or in enamel on copper, in some

few instances on silver or gold; these materials fixing an absolute limit to the size of the work, and being those solely used by artists to whom the term miniaturist may be most correctly applied. We have said 'fixing absolutely,' for, though the diameter of the tooth determines the surface of ivory which can be obtained from it, attempts have been made to unite the pieces without apparent joint, or to turn, and afterwards flatten, a plate from the circumference of the tooth, so as to form large surfaces; and also in enamelling, experiments have been tried to vitrify large plates; yet the success has been doubtful, and if obtained even would destroy the peculiar character of miniature art.

Miniature painting on ivory is practised with the ordinary transparent water colours with occasionally a little opaque colour for the high lights. Some few expedients are used in practice; but the art is simple. Enamel painting is a more complicated process, attended with many difficulties, and each artist who has excelled in it has usually adopted some expedients of his own which may be deemed his secrets. The risk of failure attends every process; the design must be traced in the first instance, and cannot be altered or amended. Success is only ensured by the utmost care and attention, assisted by that skill which long experience alone can give. Yet in the enduring brilliancy of his delicate work the artist has his reward. *Jean Petitot*, born at Geneva 1607, died 1691, was not the first who applied this art to portraiture; for it had been extensively practised by the Limoge enamellers; and their large plaques with portraits of the families of Guïse and Navarre show their mastery of the means and their artistic skill as

painters. Petitot, however, was the first who brought the art into perfect competition with miniatures on ivory, a perfection which has hardly been surpassed in the art of miniature painting in enamel. Though not to be classed with the English school, Petitot practised in England for some time in the reign of Charles I., and was greatly assisted in his experiments in the processes of vitrification, and in the choice of colours which will stand the furnace, by the chemical knowledge of Sir Theodore Mayerne, the Court physician.

In our first chapter we mentioned the great merits of the early miniature painters in this country. Holbein's miniatures are marked by a wonderful power of drawing and character, which cannot be mistaken for the many wretched made-up works attributed to his master hand. But a true work by him is rare. Hilliard's miniatures are well drawn, not wanting in character, beautiful in their delicate finish, and dresses and ornaments enriched by the use of gold, but only weakly and faintly coloured, the faces wanting in roundness and power. The Olivers shewed an advance in art-qualities and in power, yet wanted the delicacy and refinement of Hilliard; and the same may be said of their contemporary Hoskins. In Samuel Cooper, who then succeeded, miniature art culminated. His works have known many clever copyists, and have suffered greatly by repairs, but a fine work by him in a good condition, is indeed a treasure. Well drawn, full of character and expression, graceful in truthful simplicity of manner, the hair of his females charmingly treated, quiet and sweet in colour, we feel assured that the mind and very image of those who were distinguished and beautiful are before us, though two

whole centuries intervene. We know nothing—even in the works of the most distinguished artists of our own times—which can compare with those of Cooper. It has been said that he could only draw the face, but this is a mistake: he was assuredly a correct and powerful draftsman.

Following these distinguished miniaturists, we find *Thomas Flatman*, (1633-1688). He was of New College, Oxford, and was called to the bar; but he did not succeed, and he left the law for the arts. He arrived at much excellence in his miniature portraits, and his works were highly esteemed. They were on rather a larger scale than those of his predecessors, more largely painted in body colour, and though not wanting in character, were less refined in their drawing and manner. Flatman is also known as a poet, and his *Songs and Poems*, published in 1674, reached a third edition within ten years. *Alexander Browne*, a miniaturist of the same period, painted Charles II., the Countess Stuart, the Prince of Orange, and other notables, and was also a writer. He published, in 1669, *The Art of Painting, Limning, and Etching*. In Queen Anne's reign, *Lewis Crosse* excelled in miniature, and in miniature copies of the Italian masters, and had many of the nobility for his sitters. He possessed a fine collection of miniatures, which he sold in 1722. He died in 1724. *Charles Boit* was of the same time. Born in Sweden, the son of a Frenchman, he came early to England, and his art was English. He was a jeweller, and not being successful here in that trade, he tried to gain a livelihood by teaching drawing. Walpole says that he had inveigled one of his pupils, the daughter of a general officer, into a promise of marriage, and that the affair being dis-

covered, Boit was thrown into prison, where, during two years' confinement, he studied enamel painting. He practised the art in London with very great success, and received extravagant prices for his work. His colour was frequently crude and disagreeable. The difficulties of his art are shown in his attempt to execute an unusually large plate for the Queen, representing her Majesty, the Prince, and the chief officers of her Court. He received very considerable advances for this work; but though he built a furnace for the purpose, he was unable to lay an enamel ground over the large surface of his plate, and failed after many experiments. The Queen had died in the meanwhile. Boit ran into debt, and fled to France, where he was well received, and his works greatly admired. He died suddenly at Paris about 1726. *Bernard Lens*, born in London, 1680, died 1741, was distinguished in miniature, and was appointed miniature painter and enameller to George II. He was also much esteemed for his miniature copies after Rubens and Vandyke. He left two sons, who followed his profession, as did also his nephew, Lewis Goupy.

These artists were Englishmen, with the exception of Boit; who, however, belongs to our school. We have only an exceptional knowledge of their art, which, from its character, is not easily identified. Yet we cannot doubt from what is known, that their reputation in their own day may be taken as a test of their merits. Approaching the time when the memories of artists and their works were more regarded, we find many notices of *Christian Frederick Zincke*, and in the British Museum, the genial portrait of the old man seated at his work—no doubt as true as a photograph—with all the accessa-

ries of his art. He was born at Dresden, in 1684, came to England in his twenty-second year, and became the pupil of Boit. He pursued enamel painting with great success. His drawing was graceful; his works simple and refined in expression; his colour pleasing. He soon equalled, and then excelled his master, almost rivalling Petitot. He met with such great encouragement that his industry could hardly keep pace with his sitters; and he was especially patronized by George II. and his queen. His eye-sight failing in 1746, he retired from his profession, and died in South Lambeth in 1767. His enamels are well-known; several are in the Royal Collection, and though his works are numerous, their merit has always secured for them a high price. *James Deacon*, a young English artist, on Zincke's retirement, took his house in Tavistock Street, Covent Garden. Deacon's miniatures are full of character and expression, and though elaborately careful, are in a very masterly style. But he had scarcely commenced his career, which was of much promise, when attending as a witness at the Old Bailey, he caught the gaol fever, and died in 1750. At this time *Jarvis Spencer* became celebrated for his miniatures. He had been a gentleman's servant, and having a natural talent for Art, by his own perseverance he gained many eminent sitters, and became the fashionable painter of his day. His enamel portraits were collected and exhibited in 1762, and he died in the following year.

The delicate art of the enameller connects itself closely with the craft of the jeweller and the gold-chaser in their highest branches. To these trades—we would rather call them arts—the great enamellers Petitot and

Boit were bred; and in *Michael Moser, R.A.*, we have another enameller who was led to art by the same road. He was, in the true sense of the word, an ornamentist. Eminent as a painter, modeller, sculptor and teacher, he is particularly distinguished by his medals and enamels. He was born at Schaffhausen in 1704 and came to England when young. As manager of the St. Martin's Lane Schools, and one of the foundation members, and the first keeper of the Royal Academy, the arts of this country owe too much to him to permit his exclusion from any connected account of their progress. His chief works will be found on the trinkets of the day, which, according to the prevailing fashion, were ornamented by his beautiful and tasteful enamels, and we are told that he was paid a high price for two fine portraits of the young Prince of Wales and Duke of York, which he painted in enamel on a watch-case for George III., for whom he also executed the Great Seal of England. He died in 1783. His only daughter, Mary Moser, an admirable flower painter, was one of the original members of the Royal Academy. She was an amiable, lively, clever woman, and was reputed to have formed an unrequited passion for Fuseli. Her letters prove her desire to establish a literary flirtation with him. Perhaps this was the extent of her weakness, for she married a Captain Lloyd, a military officer, and afterwards only practised art as an amusement. She died in 1819.

The artist, however, who, though a long way behind him, ranked first in miniature art after Zincke, was *Nathaniel Hone, R.A.* He was the son of a merchant in Dublin, and born there about 1730. Showing a natural love of painting, a self-taught genius, he soon made his

way to England and practised portrait painting in several parts of the country, more especially at York, where he married a lady of some property, and shortly afterwards came to London and settled. Here he was the fashionable miniature painter, particularly on enamel, and was nominated one of the foundation members of the Royal Academy. We do not know on what provocation, but he had the temerity to lampoon the president in a picture which he sent for exhibition, and also the gentle Kauffmann. This brought upon him the anger of the Academy. They rejected these objectionable works, and he then made an exhibition of them with between sixty and seventy of his other works in 1775, but does not appear, like poor Barry, to have met with expulsion for his contumacy. Hone was a clever artist: he painted in oil, scraped some good mezzotints, and is known as an etcher and as the collector of some good pictures. His miniatures were hot in colour, and wanting generally in refinement of execution and beauty of finish, but they are by no means without merit. He died in 1784.

At the same time flourished *Jeremiah Meyer, R.A.*, born at Wurtemberg, 1735. He came to this country at the age of fourteen, and was reputed to have been a pupil of Zincke, though M. Rouquet says Zincke never had a pupil. He was an industrious student in the St. Martin's Lane Academy, and proved himself a good draftsman. He was appointed enamel painter to George III., and miniature painter to the Queen, and arrived at great excellence. He gave power and elegance to his work by the study of his contemporary Reynolds, and his miniatures please by their life-like truth and expression, added to a quiet refinement of colour. He was one of the original

members of the Royal Academy. He died 1789. Hayley complimented his art,—

> "Though small its field, thy pencil may presume
> To ask a wreath, where flowers eternal bloom."

Samuel Collins, born about 1752, was the pupil of Meyer. He practised miniature and enamel for some time among the fashionable world at Bath, and for a while in Dublin. He was appointed miniature painter to George III., and painted some fine portraits of the King and the Royal Family. He was largely patronized, and his works were looked for as the gems of the Academy exhibitions. He retired from his profession with a comfortable competence about 1811, and died about 1831, aged nearly eighty years. With him *Samuel Shelley* (and Cosway, of whom we shall presently speak more at large,) divided the fashionable patronage of the day. Shelley was born in Whitechapel, and had little instruction in art. He copied Reynolds, founded his style upon him, and became a rich and harmonious colourist. He was distinguished for his miniature portraits, and for his treatment of historical subjects in miniature. He was one of the founders of the Water-colour Society, and died in 1808. We must not omit also *James Nixon, A.R.A.*, born about 1741, died 1812, who was appointed limner to the Prince Regent, and miniature painter to the Duchess of York; or *Charles Sheriff*, a deaf and dumb painter of the same period, who practised at Bath about the last quarter of the last century. Both took a first place among miniature painters.

Ozias Humphrey, R.A., born at Honiton 1742, was another distinguished miniaturist. His passion for drawing induced his parents to send him to London,

where he became a student in the St. Martin's Lane School. He afterwards practised for some time at Bath, and then, invited by Reynolds, returned to London. In 1766 he exhibited a miniature at the Spring Gardens Exhibition, which was greatly extolled, and was purchased by the King, who presented him with 100 guineas, and gave him commissions to paint the Queen and other members of the Royal Family. He continued to practise his art with increasing success till 1772, when an accident caused so severe an injury that he travelled in Italy for his recovery, and made, during five years, a study of the great works. Returning in 1777, he wished to try historic art; but neither in that, nor in his portraits in oil, did he meet with the encouragement secured for his early miniatures. He was elected A.R.A. in 1779; yet, with some sense of disappointment, he embarked for India in 1785; and visiting the different provinces, painted the distinguished native princes, nabobs, and others. Compelled to return in 1788 by failing health, he resumed miniature painting in London. He again found plenty of employment, and in 1791 was elected R.A.; but his health was exhausted, his eyesight failed, and, though after some rest, he was enabled to resume his profession in the less minute manner of crayon drawings, which he followed very successfully till 1797, his eyesight then suddenly and finally failed. His miniatures, before those of any other, remind us of the excellences and graces of Reynolds. He excelled in sweetness of colour and expression, and both in miniature and crayons he displayed the greatest taste, and was deemed the head of his profession for many years. He died in 1810.

Richard Cosway, R.A., was a hero of another class, a

genius of another feather. Gossip of him is still rife, and the maccaroni miniature painter, quack, charlatan, or by whatever epithet he has been assailed by jealous caricaturists or envious rivals, has never been denied the title of an artist of the first rank. He was born in 1740, at Tiverton, where his father was master of the public school; and showing a fixed attachment to drawing, he was sent to London, and became the pupil of Hudson. He was at the same time a student at the St. Martin's Lane School, and afterwards at the Royal Academy. His abilities soon gained him notice. He had formed his taste by a careful study of the antique, and drew with freedom and elegance. He began life as a teacher in Parr's Drawing School, and drew heads for the shops, and fancy miniatures, not always of the most chaste class, for snuff-boxes; but his prominent abilities soon found him higher employment, and he rose rapidly to be the miniaturist of his day—his works not fashionable merely but the fashion itself. He was celebrated for his small whole-lengths; the figure drawn in pencil, in a manner entirely original and his own, in a sketchy style of easy elegance, the face carefully and usually highly finished in colour. Thus he drew all the beauties of the day, and, it is said, all the affianced brides. His miniatures on ivory were exquisitely wrought, in finish, grace, colour and, above all, in expression; they never fail to charm, and are still as deservedly prized as by their first possessors. But his ideal went beyond his sitter, and he added a beauty and grace of his own, which, while it detracted from the accuracy of his likeness, was, nevertheless, an error on the right side—a fault which was readily overlooked or forgiven. His

talent and great reputation gained him an early admission to the Academy. He was elected A.R.A. in 1770 and R.A. in 1771.

In person, Cosway was not only little, but mean. He assumed great airs, and his vanity tempted him to deck himself in portraits *ipse pinxit*, in the most ludicrously gorgeous costume. Aiming also at a luxurious manner, his house, and especially his studio, was filled with costly works of art, jewels, china, silks, gems, and also gewgaws of every description, and was the resort of idle fashion and rank, including the Prince Regent himself, whose favourite beauties Cosway had painted and flattered, and of whose favour and intimacy he boasted. His wife was a congenial helpmate and by her talents, beauty, and great musical abilities added *éclat* to the splendour of his crowded parties.

Maria Cosway was the daughter of an English hotel-keeper at Florence, and claims our notice on her own merits as a miniaturist and a painter. Nagler, who gives a long description in the most stilted language of her personal charms, her talents, and her paintings, says, "the English galleries are full of her exquisite works," and then turns to Richard Cosway as "husband of the foregoing!" Without joining in such high-flown opinions, we must admit that she was certainly a clever artist; she painted miniatures well, but not professionally; she also painted both for Boydell's Shakspeare and Macklin's poets, and exhibited several compositions, which were of much merit, and were well engraved; of her character it is more difficult now to speak. She has been called a splendid specimen of humanity, and is said to have run away from her husband. She certainly

joined in all her husband's vain extravagance, and the pair were the wonder and whisper of the town. For a time she resided in Paris in much gay luxury, and finally abandoned her husband in 1804, to become the superior of a religious house at Lyons, and only returned to England after the lapse of many years, in time to erect a monument to his memory. Of him we have only to add that, with age, his eccentricities and vanities increased. He believed in Swedenborg, and in animal magnetism. He held conversations with more than one person of the Trinity, and conversed with his wife while absent in Mantua, through some peculiar medium or additional sense. Whether he acted the charlatan in all this, or believed himself inspired—most probably the former—he at last professed to be able to raise the dead; and he asserted to his niece, the daughter of Dr. Syntax Coombe, that the Virgin Mary had sat to him several times, for a half-length figure, which he had just finished. He died in 1821, at a very advanced age, having for some years been prevented by sickness from following his profession.

Some of our eminent miniaturists have practised their art both in enamel and on ivory; others have painted exclusively on one only of these materials. Cosway was of the latter class, his practice, if we except his drawings, was confined to ivory. *Henry Bone, R.A.*, was an enamellist, who attained great celebrity in that art alone; and, as seems to be peculiar to the painters whose pigments are fluxed on metal, he had, in his early career, been engaged in processes where the furnace was used. He was born at Truro, in 1755, and was apprenticed to a china manufacturer at Plymouth. Commencing life as a painter of flowers and landscapes on china, in the

processes connected with that manufacture, he obtained the knowledge which led him on to the higher practice on metal. He removed with the manufacturer to whom he was apprenticed to Bristol, and on the termination of his apprenticeship in 1778, he came to London, and found employment as an enameller of watches and trinkets, occasionally painting a miniature in water colour. The fashion of enamelling devices on jewellery then changing, he determined to make efforts to gain employment in works of a higher class, and after much study of his colours and the required fluxes, he painted the "Sleeping Girl" after Reynolds, and then a portrait of his wife, which he exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1780, and at once attracted public notice. He continued to execute such device painting as offered, studying meanwhile, and was able to produce from his own design "A Muse and Cupid" of a size far exceeding any hitherto ordinarily finished in enamel.

His works were now in general estimation. He was noticed by the Prince of Wales, (who for several years purchased his best pictures), and was largely employed; he was elected A.R.A. in 1801 and R.A. in 1811, and was appointed successively enamel painter to George III., George IV., and William IV. He executed in enamel many portraits from his own sitters, but his most valued works were after Reynolds, Titian, Raphael, and Murillo. He also executed a series of portraits of the Russell family from the time of Henry VII. and of the Royalists distinguished during the Civil War; and from the royal and other collections eighty-five portraits of the great men of Queen Elizabeth's reign. These works were of course all copies,

and it seems a peculiarity of the enameller's art, arising perhaps, from its uncertain, difficult, and laborious processes, that the artist is tempted aside from originality to seek reputation and profit, though it places him in the second rank, as a copyist of the celebrated or favourite works of the great masters. Of this class was his "Bacchus and Ariadne," which he sold for 2,200 guineas. His eye-sight failing, and no wonder after such trying labours, he retired to Somers Town. He had brought up and educated a large family, and was reluctantly compelled to receive the Royal Academy pension. He died in his seventy-eighth year, in 1834, complaining in his old age that his artist friends had forgotten him. His works were sold after his death, greatly beneath their value, and his collection of Elizabethan portraits, of which he left the refusal to the Government for 5,000*l.*, was dispersed.

Founding his manner somewhat on the pencilled portraits of Cosway, *Henry Edridge, A.R.A.*, rose to a well-earned distinction as a miniature painter. He was the son of a tradesman in St. James's, Westminster, and was born in Paddington in 1769, and soon left one of five children dependent upon a young widowed mother with only scant provision. By her he was chiefly educated, and, shewing an early predilection for art, was, when fourteen, apprenticed to William Pether (the cousin of old Pether) who was a portrait and miniature painter, and distinguished by his mezzotint engraving. At sixteen Edridge was admitted a student of the Royal Academy, and in 1786 gained the Academy silver medal and with it the notice of the president, Reynolds, of whose portraits he was permitted to make miniature

copies for his own improvement. After a time he laid aside engraving and, continuing the study of miniature, established himself as a portrait painter. His earliest works were on ivory, but afterwards his portraits were executed with much spirit on paper with the black lead pencil over washes of Indian ink. This manner, however, after several years, he discontinued and worked in water colours, touching in the figure in a slight, graceful manner, but finishing the head. In such works his finish was remarkable for its brilliancy and truth, uniting richness with freedom and freshness, perhaps acquired by his study of Reynolds. He had also a great taste for landscape art, which he had cultivated in his intimacy with Hearne; and, in 1817, and again in 1819, he visited France and found many subjects for his pencil in the picturesque beauties of Paris and the fine Gothic edifices of Normandy. These he drew chiefly with the pencil, but he also made finished water-colour landscape drawings which possess great merit. In 1820 he was elected an associate of the Royal Academy. He was then in ill-health and in a desponding state; he had lost his daughter in her seventeenth year, followed by his only remaining child, a son of the same age, and his constitution sank under the last blow. He died of an attack of asthma in 1821, and was buried in Bushey churchyard by his friend Dr. Munro, whose name is well known in art.

Early in the present century, *Andrew Robertson* rose to eminence as a miniature painter, and came to be regarded in his day as the father of his art. He was born at Aberdeen about 1778 and was the son of a cabinet-maker. In 1800 he walked up to London to seek his fortune. He was noticed by President West who sat

to him for his portrait. His miniatures are correct in drawing, well finished, though sometimes crude in colour, and have the character of correct likeness and expression. They possessed such merit as to attract great patronage; but they wanted those perfections which are indicative of true genius given only to the few. He enjoyed a considerable reputation for above thirty years, and on retiring from his profession in 1844, the most distinguished miniature painters presented him with a piece of plate in testimony of his merits. It has been said that he might have risen to higher eminence if his love of art had been undivided; but he was greatly attached to music, and was renowned for his skill on the violin. He was also a contributor of articles on art to the *Literary Gazette*, and gave much of his time to the promotion of charitable institutions. He was a member of the Associated Artists in Water Colours. He died at Hampstead, December 15, 1845.

Approaching nearer our own times and our own personal recollections and friendships, we have to speak of *Alfred Edward Chalon, R.A.*, who for one generation at least held a distinguished rank as the fashionable portrait painter in water colours. He was of an ancient French family which had left France at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and had been long settled in Geneva. His grandfather was wounded at the battle of the Boyne, where he served as volunteer in a French Protestant regiment under William the Third (whose military pass the family possessed). His father, to whom some property had descended, left Geneva on the troubles which followed the breaking out of the French Revolution, and with his young family settled in

England. He was appointed Professor of the French Language and Literature at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and afterwards, coming nearer to London, lived for many years in Kensington Square, with his wife, two sons, and a daughter. Alfred Chalon, the younger of the two boys, was born at Geneva in 1780, and with his brother was first placed in a large mercantile house, but the drudgery was equally distasteful to both; they had a desire to be artists, for which their talents eminently fitted them, and with the consent of their father both commenced art. Alfred became a student of the Royal Academy in 1797. He was gifted with great taste and power, and soon acquired a bold vigorous style of drawing. He devoted himself chiefly to portraiture in water colours, and became distinguished by his genius, fancy, and great feeling for brilliant colour. His full-length portraits in this manner, usually about ten inches high, as well as his miniatures on ivory, were full of character, painted with a dashing facile grace, and never common-place. His draperies and accessories were drawn with spirit and elegance, imitations of all the vagaries fashion can commit in lace and silk, and though not a mannerist, in a style peculiarly his own.

Alfred Chalon was one of the members of the Associated Artists in Water Colours, a short-lived Society founded in 1808, and in the same year himself and his brother joining a few friends, established "The Sketching Club," of which we shall speak hereafter. In 1810 he exhibited his first picture at the Royal Academy. In 1812 he was elected A.R.A. In 1816 R.A. His genius was not restricted to the limits prescribed by the use of water colours. He exhibited many excellent works in oil,

powerfully painted and treated with all the skilled manner of a master in that medium. Of them we may mention his "Hunt the Slipper," a large picture full of figures in action, in 1831; "Samson and Delilah," exhibited in 1837, and also at the International Exhibition 1862; "Sophia Western," in 1857, and many others. He had a singular power of imitating the style and manner of the great masters, so that the connoisseur would exclaim, "Rubens! Paul Veronese! Watteau!"—the latter painter being the special object of his admiration. In 1855 his works, together with his brother's, were exhibited by the Society of Arts at their rooms in the Adelphi. The collection and arrangement of this exhibition, particularly of his late brother's pictures, were the greatest interest to him, his disappointment at its failure grievous. The press sneered at the collection, and the public evinced no interest; the rooms were empty. His friend and brother academician Leslie, said, "It was to me a proof, if I had wanted one, of the non-appreciation of colour at the present time, that the exhibition of Alfred and John Chalon's pictures failed to attract notice. Except at the private view, I doubt whether any artist entered the rooms, though there is not one living, who might not have learned much by studying the pictures there. I went as to a school, and indeed I always felt myself in a school in the house of the Chalons. To my mind, Alfred Chalon has long been the first among painters in water colours."

We have had a difficulty in speaking separately of the two Brothers Chalon, and the plan of our work seems wrong, that it places even the art of the two in different chapters. Unmarried, they had passed a long

life together. They lived many years in Great Marlborough Street, then in Wimpole Street, and finally removed to a part of the Old House on Camden Hill, Kensington, which Alfred Chalon, full of conceits, named "El buen Retiro;" but his brother's paralytic attack following soon after, his friends noticed that these words were removed from the gate, and repainted with the omission of the adjective, from a feeling of too presumptuous hopes, or possibly a presentiment of approaching sorrow. Alfred Chalon was a true Englishman in heart, though his manner was French. He was an accomplished musician, witty, with a keen sense of satire, which, if provoked, found only a momentary expression; full of anecdote and the gossip of his profession. As a host, active to the last to provide for the enjoyment of his friends, and full of expedients for their amusement. Many would join in the expression of Leslie, that he counted his intimacy with the Chalons among the best things of his life.

He had been for some time unwell—but hardly appeared less gay in society—when his friends learnt that after a sudden attack of severe sickness, he had died on the 3rd October, 1860, aged 80 years. He was laid in the same grave with his brother in the Highgate Cemetery. He had a large collection of pictures, drawings and sketches by himself and his brother, with many hoarded family reminiscences. This collection he proposed in 1859 to give to the inhabitants of Hampstead, with some endowment for its maintenance, but they were unable to provide a suitable building for its exhibition; and he then offered the collection to the Government, but no satisfactory arrange-

ment was arrived at when he died. A will which was found, was informally executed, his property came to his heirs-at-law—some distant relatives at Geneva—and his treasured collection was sold by auction.

Our chapter will find a graceful completion with the name *Sir William Charles Ross, R.A.*, who both on the male and female side, was descended from a clever race, and was born on the 3rd June, 1794. At an age when most children seek their toys, he found his amusement in drawing the likenesses of his family; and debarred by a weakly constitution from sharing in the robust exercises of boyhood, he was led to the more close application to drawing, and was an earnest and precocious student. In his boyish days he had gained several of the Society of Arts medals, and no less than five silver medals were the prizes of his student career at the Royal Academy. At the age of twenty he was engaged by Mr. Andrew Robertson, as his assistant, and under this eminent miniaturist, he enjoyed great means of improvement. His ambition led him to devote his spare hours to the study of historic art. One of the Society of Arts prizes which he had gained was a gold medal for an oil painting, "The Judgment of Brutus," and following the same bent in 1825, he exhibited at the Royal Academy, a large work in oil, the figures life-size, "Christ casting out the Devils from the Maniacs of the Tombs," but his art, if not his inclinations, lay in another direction, and he soon established a high reputation as a miniature painter.

In 1837 he was commissioned by the Queen to paint her Majesty's own miniature, and also the miniatures of the Royal family. In 1838 he was elected

associate, and in 1839, a full member of the Royal Academy; and in the same year he received the honour of knighthood. Then he was surrounded with distinguished sitters. He painted the members of the Saxe-Gotha family, including the King and Queen of the Belgians with their young family. He went to Lisbon and painted the King and Queen of Portugal, with several of the court. Prince Louis Napoleon also sat to him, as did a generation of the best and fairest of his own country. His miniatures exceeded 2,200. He confined his work to ivory; we know of no attempts by him in enamel. In his style we see more indications of his study of Reynolds than of any other master. He possessed the great power of combining a faithful resemblance and individuality of character and expression, with art of a high class. His drawing was refined and accurate, his composition and grouping agreeable, his colouring of the complexion, hands, and arms of his female sitters admirable, and the draperies, accessories and backgrounds, painted and arranged with great taste and skill. We should add that, amid all his engagements, his dormant passion was revived by the cartoon competition in 1843; and that for his "Angel Raphael discoursing with Adam and Eve," which he sent in anonymously, he was awarded one of the extra premiums of 100*l*. Sir William Ross was of amiable and simple manners, true to all, without offence, always showing the most loyal attachment to art and its professors. As a bachelor, he passed a quiet, uneventful, and successful life; ready at all times to do any act of charity, or to assist in any good work. About the beginning of 1858 he was overcome by a gradual attack

of paralysis, from which he partially rallied, but after a relapse died on the 20th January, 1860, in his 66th year. He rests in the cemetery at Highgate.

The two distinguished artists, whose works we have just described, were contemporaries and true friends, and they lived to see the too probable extinction of their art; the school of miniature painting, which had flourished so long, almost ended with them; an art of such great beauty, and so much prized, succumbed before the cheap attractions of photography. When this ingenious chemical discovery was first applied to portraiture, and all looked with pleased wonder at the minute exactness of Nature's own copy, the Queen remarked to Alfred Chalon, —then her Majesty's miniature painter—that photography would ruin his profession, to which he is said to have replied,—We can almost see his formal bow!—"Ah non, madame, photographie can't flattère!" He knew well what art and genius were required to do for beauty, how every grace of expression, colour, and action had to be studied and seized in the happiest combination, and he did not fear the rivalry of any operation, which, however apparently true, was after all only mechanical: but Sir William Ross was more prescient. His regrets were for others, when on his death-bed he bewailed that "it was all up with future miniature painting." Photography has indeed entirely superseded the large class of artists who gained a livelihood as miniature painters, and has discouraged the young student from attempting that hitherto profitable branch of art. From this class of undistinguished men genius emerged and excellence arose; now the germs of the art are stifled in the beginning.

Yet we do not undervalue photography. It has

rendered important assistance to science, of which it has become the prompt and most exact record, and it has been an incalculable gratification and happiness to all classes, placing within the reach of all by its sixpenny portraits, recollections which delight; and to the wealthy perpetuating childhood and infancy at every stage, and under every condition; recording even the fancies of a becoming dress or costume, with the exact domestic associations of all; and to this extent it has spread over a wide field art associations, but not art. We do not think that art can profit by its aid, or that artists can safely employ it as a means to improvement. Though to them it often suggests much, yet great as its attractions are, we fear they are illusory and dangerous. If it has superseded an enduring art which satisfied the eclectic few, the million have found a true gratification from it of which we would on no exclusive ground deprive them. Yet the photographic portrait is not even an exact transcript of its original. Every part of the face or figure which projects beyond the true plane of the lens, is exaggerated and distorted, the lines and shadows of the face are aggravated and hard, the action is constrained, and the expression rarely agreeable or natural; though there are occasional exceptions which are truly pleasing. The recommendation to send a vain beauty to the photographer, is not a bad one. If she believes his art to produce absolute truth, it may call forth other reflections than her glass suggests.

CHAPTER XV.

BOOK ILLUSTRATORS AND DESIGNERS.

The first Illustrators—And their Successors—Bell's illustrated Edition of the Poets—*William Blake* begins Life as an Engraver—Then tries Design—Questions as to his Sanity—His Inventions and Poetry—"Songs of Innocence"—Other Poems—His Process of Printing—"Jerusalem"—Blair's Grave—Illustrations to the Book of Job—His Character and Death—*Thomas Stothard, R.A.*—Designs for Bell's Poets—And the *Novelists' Magazine*—Opinions on his Art—His great Talent and Industry—*The Westalls*—*Robert Smirke, R.A.*—*Thomas Uwins, R.A.*, Designer and Painter—*Thomas Bewick*—His Designs and Woodcuts—The Annuals—The Etching Club—The English School of Engravers.

THE painter's art in its early dissemination received a powerful impulse from the engraver's; and the painter and engraver stood in nearly the same relation towards each other as the poet and the painter, for Raphael and Rubens may be said to owe as much of their wide-spread fame to the one, as Dante and Milton to the other. Painting and engraving have also been frequently practised with success by the same individual, both on the first dawning of art here, and down to our own day. The most renowned painters also have practised etching—so peculiarly a painter's art—and since the discovery of mezzotint, we are repeatedly told of our painters, in the language of the last century, that "they scraped a bit."

Some of the earliest books printed were of a religious

character, and following the missal style some of the first illustrations of printed books were repetitions on wood of the early illuminators' art, occasionally tinted with colour. Such were soon followed by portrait frontispieces, sometimes surrounded by allegories. *William Faithorne*, (B. about 1629, D. 1691) drew from the life some of the many interesting portraits which we owe to his graver; so did also *David Loggan*, (B. 1630, D. 1693), of whom Dryden in his satire on a would-be poet, said,—

> "And at the front of all his senseless plays
> Makes David Loggan crown his head with bays."

Robert White, (B. 1645, D. 1704) was the pupil of Loggan, and a notable example of the union of the painters' with the gravers' art, in works deemed of great merit in his day, which have not lost favour in ours. These men, and their less-known contemporaries, produced portraits on copper, frequently most carefully and elaborately finished with the etching point, and as is recorded upon them "ad vivum," which have been carefully sought out in succeeding generations by the enthusiastic art-collector and antiquary, till rare frontispieces torn from valueless books have found greedy purchasers at prices which might have stirred the artists in the graves where they have so long lain.

Coëval with the portrait frontispiece, though commencing at a later period, were the topographical views, and other objects, chiefly stimulated by antiquarian research, and usually both drawn and engraved by the same artist, but rarely with much merit: objects of natural history followed, botanical specimens, insects, birds and beasts. These were mere accessories necessary

to the elucidation of the subjects to which they related, not art-illustrations of the thoughts of the poet, the inventions of the novelist, or the great events of the historian. But to such they were the precursors. Hogarth, to whom we have dedicated a previous chapter, having executed some small commissions for booksellers, which did not go much beyond diagrams, completed in 1726, a set of small designs for an edition of *Hudibras*, which, so far as we can discover, were the first book illustrations of story and character, and the beginning of a new art. His example was soon followed by his genial friend *Frank Hayman*, who enjoyed the reputation of being our best history painter, and of having established the practice of book illustration. He made designs for Moore's *Fables*, Congreve's *Plays*, Newton's edition of *Milton*, Hanmer's *Shakspeare*, and Smollett's *Don Quixote*, and for Pope's works, in conjunction with *Nicholas Blakey*, with whom he was also associated in some other undertakings. Hayman's designs had much merit. They showed humour and character, and were well composed, though they were slight and sketchy, and smacked of a French origin.

Samuel Wale, R.A., (D. 1786) was a follower and imitator of Hayman. He found employment chiefly as a book illustrator, and is only remembered by such designs. *Henri Gravelot*, educated in Paris, a designer by profession, an engraver of necessity, was a book illustrator, and a caricaturist to boot, who worked hard while here, and returned to France with a fortune. *John Vanderbanck*, who was born and bred in England, engaged in the same pursuit, and designed among other works for Lord Carteret's translation of *Don Quixote*. To these

we must add *Joseph Highmore*, (B. 1692, D. 1780) who illustrated his friend Richardson's *Pamela*, and painted his portrait, which hangs in Stationer's Hall, or did lately. Some few others found occasional employment in ornamenting books, as it was called, but we have named the chief artists. The booksellers found the plan profitable. It gave some value to a bad book, and increased value to a good one. By its means, in the absence of exhibitions, the works of artists became more extensively known; and those who can call to mind the narrow circulation, and bad class of prints which were to be met with at the beginning of this century, can form some idea of the dearth even of such works half a century earlier, when George II. expressed his contempt for "Boets and Bainters;" and Hogarth, who could not find half-a-dozen print-shops in London, and before whose time there were only two, was compelled to seek engravers in France, to assist him on his renowned plates. Then, unmeaning allegory and incomprehensible emblems ran riot, and the wide-spread canvases on our halls and ceilings were vilely imitated in little as book illustrations.

Bell's well-known edition of the British poets, which extended to one hundred and nine duodecimo volumes, was now commenced (1778), and was followed by his *British Theatre*, and his *Shakspeare;* of these works the miniature illustrations were a prominent feature, and no doubt contributed to their success. The art of the designer became a fashion. *Cipriani, R.A.*, and *Angelica Kauffmann, R.A.*, of whom we have already spoken, were mainly employed by the publishers, and their works lent some taste and elegance to design. *William Hamil-*

ton, R.A., (B. 1750, D. 1801), was also extensively employed by Boydell, Macklin, and Bowyer. His best works were designed for their publications. Light and pleasing, but effeminate in manner, somewhat following Angelica Kauffmann, though more theatrical in style. With him we may also class *Francis Wheatley, R.A.*, (B. 1747, D. 1801). His forte lay in landscape with rustic figures, treated with taste, but marked by an over-refined prettiness. These four artists were employed upon the illustrated editions from the press of Bell and of others, and though their labours were calculated to establish and maintain the love for the new art, and were quite equal to the public appreciation of the time, they did not lead to its advance. Among their younger competitors, were, however, men of greater and more original powers, engaged in the same works, and calculated to give to book designs a grace and beauty not hitherto known in the art of any country. Of these men and their influences we must speak more at large. Stothard and Blake began their art-life as friends. They were led to its pursuit by the promptings of their own genius, but never, as we shall see, did two men, from their opposite natures, take more divergent paths to renown.

William Blake, engraver, painter, poet, and we might add, printer, was the son of a respectable hosier. He was born in London, 1757, and died in 1827, finding his resting-place in an unknown common grave in the great Bunhill-Fields burial ground. He was at first intended for his father's business, but as a child he gave signs of a restless genius. At an early age he attempted both poetry and designing, and, that an attachment to such pursuits might not be altogether thwarted, he

was apprenticed to Basire, the engraver, second of the name. His love of poetry did not lead him astray; he was careful to attain a mastery of the engraver's art, though he repudiated the love of money and declared that his business was "not to gather gold, but to make glorious shapes, expressing god-like sentiments," and to this he surely devoted himself. By his labour during the day with his graver he gained a bare subsistence, while his nights were given to the realization of his dreams with his pen and his pencil. At the age of twenty-six he married, and the necessity arose for the greater use of his graver. In his engravings he was minute and painstaking; his drawing good, his line pure and true. His works are sometimes marked by minute finish, at others left in a state of unfinish, apparently from caprice, or as though he did not care to go further than the realization of his idea. From the termination of his apprenticeship till 1782, and occasionally afterwards, he was employed in engraving for book illustrations, chiefly from some of Stothard's earliest designs, but in some instances from his own. It is as a designer and painter, however, not as an engraver, that William Blake falls within the scope of our work. In 1791, six plates designed and also engraved by him, were published as illustrations of Mary Wollstonecroft's *Tales for Children;* and in 1793, nine plates for an expensive edition of *Gay's Fables*, published by Stockdale. These designs have a natural air of original simplicity, with sometimes a peculiar touch of wildness, as in the "Father beside his Dead Children in Jail" in the *Tales for Children*, upon whose youthful minds we are told it left an impression of pained dreamy fear. In the

fables, the animals were wooden, their drawing not well understood, and far beneath the treatment of such subjects now.

It is not our purpose in writing a history of modern painting in England to include more of the biography of our painters than relates to such facts and events in their lives and condition, as may have exercised a direct influence over their art. With this limit, however, we cannot escape the questions which have been raised as to Blake's sanity, nor would it indeed be possible to speak critically of his art, without at least alluding to them. The degrees between sanity, eccentricity and madness are subtle, and a puzzle even for our tribunals. Happily, we need not meddle authoritatively where not only doctors, but lawyers differ. It is told of one of the Popes that one day, prompted we suppose by unusually hot weather, he asked an attendant cardinal, what would be said if they threw off their clothes, and was told, "Doubtless we should be thought mad;" to which the Pope logically replied, "Do our dresses then alone prove our sanity?" To this test Blake could not refer, for his friend and patron, Mr. Betts, relates that, calling upon him in Lambeth one day, in 1793, he found Mr. and Mrs. Blake sitting together in a summer-house at the bottom of their strip of garden, freed from all those troublesome disguises which have prevailed since the Fall. "Come in," said Blake, "it's only Adam and Eve, you know." Husband and wife had been reciting passages from *Paradise Lost* in character, and the garden in Hercules Buildings had to represent the Garden of Eden, a little to the scandal of surrounding neighbours, on that as well as on more than one previous

occasion. Such an incident may afford some insight into the painter's mind, and we insert it.

At this time Blake, following the wild promptings of his own imagination, commenced those mysterious compositions of which he was at once the poet, painter, and engraver. Taught by necessity, he invented a process of his own, though he alleged it was revealed to him in a vision. By drawing on copper with a medium which resisted acid, he obtained a raised design. From this he was enabled to print both the design and his lengthened closely written poetry, which covers some entire pages, and in others, crowded round his figured imaginings, fills every cranny upon his copper. These works, aided by his wife, he pulled off at a common printing press and then tinted. His colouring, with rare exceptions in the prints we have seen, possesses none of the brilliancy and beauty ascribed to it; but is produced with the commonest pigments, probably prepared by himself, —dutch pink, ochre and gamboge, blue, red, and green. Sometimes he has neglected to reverse part of the lettering on his plates, and it prints backwards; occasionally a principal figure has been printed both ways by transferring, and with a dark or light background is made to serve for two designs. The engravings themselves produced by this process were of the rudest character, the outlines thick and crude, the flesh of the figures, grimed, blackened and spotted. In this manner he completed his "Songs of Innocence," and "Songs of Experience," probably the best of the class, which contain some pleasing ideas both in design and poetry; and were followed by his "America, a Prophecy." Unbalanced minds are always disturbed by great events, and this

latter work arose out of the excitement which attended the breaking out of the American Revolution; as a rhapsody, it is altogether incomprehensible, and it would be impossible to look at it as the production of a sound intellect. His "Europe, a Prophecy" followed in 1794, full of diseased horrors, from the grand wreathed serpent, which forms the title, to the illustration of "Famine,"—a father and mother preparing the cauldron to cook their dead child, which lies stretched out at their feet.

Blake's most mad, most strange imaginings, were published in 1804, "Jerusalem, the emanation of the Giant Albion." Dated South Molton Street—Bedlam might have been more appropriate. This poem, with occasional illustrations, runs over one hundred pages, closely engraved in a small script hand. Blake says of it, "To the public, after my three years' slumber on the banks of the ocean, I again display my giant forms to the public; my former giants and fairies having received the highest reward possible. . . . I cannot doubt that this more consolidated and extended work will be as kindly received. . . . I also hope that the reader will be with me, wholly one in Jesus our Lord," and then he concludes with these obscure lines,—

> "Even from the depths of hell, his voice I hear
> Within the unfathomed caverns of my ear;
> Therefore I print, nor vain my types shall be,
> Heaven, earth, and hell, henceforth shall live in harmony."

It seems that Blake's most disordered dreams found their expression in the process he had invented, and he probably flew to this process when in his excited moods, as the means of rapidly embodying his heated ideas. Certainly he thus traced his wildest and most incomprehensible forms, in extravagant and often impos-

sible action—a map of muscular development. On the other hand, his best thoughts are represented with his graver—perhaps the early associations connected with the toil of his 'prentice years, and the process of patient labour which its use involves, may have assisted to temper the artist's impetuous fancy—and we would rather speak of his genius in reference to the works he engraved in a pure manner; they are also the best known: The "Young's Night Thoughts," an uncompleted work commenced in 1797, of which every page was a design, the type forming the centre; and "Blair's Grave," published 1804–5. The daring fertility of Blake's invention will be shown by his own description of the subjects in the former poem. What other artist has attempted such as "The Universal Empire of Death characterized by his plucking the Sun from his sphere—" a striding figure of death, trampling under each gristly foot a crowned head, and, with one hand impetuously seizing the sun, represented as a shaded globe giving light, and the other hand grasping his dart; or "A Personification of Thunder, directing the adoration of the Poet to the Almighty in Heaven." Here the head and hand only of a fearful figure in human form are seen surrounded by lightning, and on a corner of earth, the poet. We quote only one more, where all are of the same character, "A Personification of Truth, as she is represented by the Poet, bursting on the last moments of the sinner in thunder and in flames."

Blake's inventions were hardly of this world. The Creator frequently occupies the centre of his subject; spirits and angels, good and evil, crowd his compositions; monsters, and distorted forms of another creation, fill

up ideal space. His illustrations of the "Book of Job," the labour of his last and ripest years, is of these, mingled with much of the sweetest and most impressive humanity. It was published in 1825, and comprises twenty-one plates minutely drawn and carefully engraved. Impressed with Blake's ungovernable imagination, they are yet full of passages of great tenderness and feeling. "Thus did Job continually" represents Job, his family and friends, returning thanks to God, and is a composition teeming with poetry. An expression of dignified passionate grief fills—"Let the day perish wherein I was born,"—the upraised hands of the prophet, the utter despair of the prostrate family, and the gloomy character of the background, all combine in the same sentiment. "The just, upright man is laughed to scorn," is of the same high conception; while "When the morning stars sang together and all the Sons of God shouted for joy," is marked by a combination of grace, sweetness, and poetry; qualities which are also united in "There were not found women so fair as the daughters of Job," and in the concluding subject, "So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning." These were the works of a great, if a diseased mind. They impress us with Blake's genius; yet his art was not likely to breed imitators, though it was not without its influence, and we find traces of it in the designs of the period. If Cipriani and Angelica Kauffmann added grace, Blake contributed power, and a range of imagination unknown in the vapid notions of the earlier book illustrators—the very wildness of his imagination and contempt for rules helping to emancipate art from the trammels of conventionality.

A few words more on Blake's character. He was contentedly poor. His industry must have been unwearied, and we do not doubt that though neglected, he was happy when laboriously engaged in realizing the creations of his fruitful genius. His designs alone would indicate a nervously sensitive, irascible temperament, of which proof is not wanting. His friend, Hayley, the poet, who tempted Blake to reside near him for a time in a small village on the Sussex coast, calls him the "gentle, visionary Blake." The epithet "gentle," was surely misapplied, as Hayley probably experienced. When irritated, and Blake was not without many real causes of irritation, he took no care to conceal his passion, and was not mealy-mouthed either in word or in print. Thus of his quondam friend he writes—

"*On H.* (*Hayley*), *the Pickthank.*

I write the Rascal thanks; till he and I,
With thanks and compliments, are quite drawn dry."

And again in the same strain and to the same—

"Thy friendship oft has made my heart to ache;
Do be my enemy, for friendship's sake."

In the same spirit he wrote of the president of the Royal Academy. "I consider Reynolds' discourses to the Royal Academy, as the simulation of the hypocrite, who smiles particularly when he means to betray. His praise of Raphael is like the hysteric smile of revenge, his softness and candour the hidden trap and poisoned feast;" and of the friend of his young days he says, in his public address on the publication of his *Canterbury Pilgrims*:—"Stothard is such a fool as to suppose that his blundering blurs can be made out and delineated by any engraver who knows how to cut dots and lozenges,

equally well with those little prints which I engraved for him twenty-four years ago, and by which he got up his reputation as a draughtsman." Such are examples—not isolated ones—of Blake's mind in its disturbed moods, necessary to a just insight into his character, but as unnecessary, as it is far from our wish, to dwell upon. We know that Blake was affectionate in his friendships, and that his love for a tender wife was as enduring as his love for his art.

It is pleasant to write of *Thomas Stothard, R.A.*, with whose works so many sweet memories are associated. He was born in London, 1755, and being a delicate child, was sent to Acomb, in Yorkshire, his father's native county, and placed in the charge of the widowed mistress of the little village school. Of a gentle, retiring disposition, he found a solitary amusement in drawing. He was afterwards removed to a school at Tadcaster, and at the age of thirteen returned to his parents in London, and was sent to a boys' school at Ilford. In 1770 his father died, leaving him 1,200*l.* in the funds. He began life as an apprentice to a pattern draftsman for brocaded silks in Spitalfields, and occupied his spare hours in designs from the poets. Some of these by chance falling under the notice of the publisher of the *Novelists' Magazine*, he engaged him to make a few designs, and though at the time he did not receive further employment, his attention was thus directed to book illustration. He had fallen upon his right path, and he abandoned pattern-drawing.

Stothard's first designs were engraved for an edition of *Ossian*, and for *Bell's Poets*. The subjects were congenial, and his talents were conspicuous. But he

showed a higher excellence in the series of illustrations which he now commenced for the *Novelists' Magazine*. The subjects which this publication offered were peculiarly suited to his pencil. His tender and gentle nature led him to delineate the affections rather than the passions—beauty and grace rather than the higher emotions. His sympathies found little pleasure in the heroic—less in the tragic. He delighted in such incidents of every-day life as the novel afforded, and he treated them in the costume of the time with great character, truth, and grace. His eleven designs for *Peregrine Pickle*, published in this magazine, 1781, combine all his best qualities; we would refer to them as examples of his art. He did not succeed in broad humour, but his quiet conception of the characters of Trunnion, Hatchway, and Pipes, is excellent, and identifies them in our imagination with the creations of Smollett. The works of Richardson—how fortunate such a writer to be kept alive a generation beyond his day by such an illustrator!—contained characters and incidents which harmonized with Stothard's creations, and in *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*, are several of his best designs. We would especially refer to "Lovelace's Dream" in the former novel—a composition full of imagery, from the engraving of which our remarks will be understood. Stothard's original drawings were truly beautiful; his designs found just appreciation; employment of all kinds was offered to him, and the commissions of all were executed. He was paid one guinea each for those for the *Novelists' Magazine*, of which there are no less than 148. He made designs of the same class for the *Poetical Magazine* and the *Lady's*

Magazine, and here, even the monstrosities of changing fashion yield to him. He has left us little graceful mementoes of court balls and birth-day suppers, and we trace his all-pervading taste in every variety of design—slight sketches of popular performers, tickets for concerts; headings for charitable announcements, and drawings for Goldsmith's work, of which last his "Wellington Shield" is a renowned example.

Early in life Stothard married, and a wife, soon followed by a large young family, proved indeed hostages to fortune. The circumstances of his wedding bring home to us the artless simplicity of the man, which all his works testify. He took his bride home from the church, and then quietly betook himself to his studies at the Royal Academy; and when at 3 P.M., the schools closed, he said to a friend, who as fellow-student had sat by his side all the morning:—"I am now going home to meet a family party. Do come with me, for I have this day taken to myself a wife." If trials were necessary to such a disposition, they did not fail him. One son, a lad of thirteen, was suddenly shot dead by a companion; another, in his thirty-fourth year, was found dead, having fallen on the floor of a church, where he was engaged in making a drawing for his work, "Magna Britannia."

The writer of a single memoir, frequently an intimate friend or relative, can hardly be without bias—too apt to look at the subject of his memoir alone, and to measure him without comparison with his contemporaries. Stothard's amiable biographer, Mrs. Bray, the widow of his son, speaks of him "as the greatest historical painter this country ever produced," as ex-

celling all others in all styles—the sacred, the poetic, and the humourous, and as inimitable in depicting the ruder humour of Cervantes' Sancho, and of Shakspeare's Clowns. While not yielding to the highest appreciation of Stothard's genius, we cannot concur in this eulogium. The bent of Stothard's own mind would not have led him to sacred, or even historical subjects; his conceptions were not of the severe character such require, and his works of this class are wanting both in severity of expression, and elevation of character. Nor has he fully realized the humour of Cervantes or Shakspeare, though some of his conceptions of the latter are admirable; and he preceded his friend Leslie by his "Duke and Duchess Reading *Don Quixote*," as well as by his "Widow Wadman in the Sentry-box," one of his illustrations for *Tristram Shandy*. In his designs for *Pilgrim's Progress*, published in 1788, the subjects are treated with much sentiment and beauty; but the same want is felt, though it is less apparent, as the work combines allegory with its higher theme. Again he wanted individuality, particularly in his females. His beauty, perfect as it is, is of one conventional type.

Stothard made two sets of designs for *Robinson Crusoe*, the last capitally engraved by Medland and repeated by Heath. These designs have been classed among Stothard's best works. They are admirable—equal to Defoe's tale in their reality and truth—but the story does not contain the subjects in which Stothard's chief excellence lay; we have no females or children, which he could endow with his tenderness and grace. These are combined with the sweetest allegory in his designs for the *Rape of the Lock*, 1798, and his illustra-

tions to *Gessner*, 1802. Perhaps he never surpassed the works of this period, though he did not fail to maintain through a long life his high reputation. His designs for Rogers' *Poems*, 1820, as engraved on wood by Clennell, are close imitations of his pencil. His six designs for Cowper's *Poems*, 1825, and his ten plates for *Il Decamerone*, are excellent; the backgrounds in the latter, landscape and architecture, full of appropriate character and beauty. In proof that his latest work showed no falling off, we would point to his "Custina," "Genevra," the "Tarantella," the "Guitar," and the "Cupid and Psyche," in the illustrations made 1830–33 for his old friend Rogers' last edition of his *Poems*.

The Royal Academy was not slow to recognize Stothard's talents. He was elected associate 1785 and full member 1794. His habit of study did not lead him to make elaborate drawings from the figure; he chose rather to make slight sketches of the model from several points of view. He was a close observer of nature, but felt cramped by the stiffness of the posed model, and strove rather to attain motion and grace, relying upon the truth of the first impression. He had a catholic love of art, and as recollections of Raphael, Rubens, Watteau, and other artists possessed his mind, we may trace the reflex of their influence on his work, but without loss of his originality. His larger works in oil do not equal his drawings, the fancy, purity, elegance and grace of which added an unsurpassed charm to book illustration, in which he stands unrivalled. His designs have been estimated to amount to 4,000; engravings amounting to nearly half that number were collected by Mr. Balmanno, F.R.S., and are now in the print-room

at the British Museum. This collection is, we believe, nearly exhaustive, and it is a sufficient proof of Stothard's invention and industry. He died in 1834, and the venerable artist has left an additional picture in our minds, when in his last years, deaf and feeble, he was occupied in his evening duties as librarian at the Royal Academy. There bending over some book of prints, with many unconscious sighs and moans, his unsteady hand was unable to pour out the cup of tea in which he found a solace, yet even then, retiring into the recess of the window, he would, from time to time, occupy his pencil for a few moments, in the realization of some thought, in a slight but still elegant and graceful sketch.

Among the contemporaries of Stothard pursuing the same walk in art, we must notice *John Hamilton Mortimer, A.R.A.*, if only for the great reputation which he enjoyed at the commencement of his career. He was born at Eastbourne in 1739, and, coming to London to study, acquired a knowledge of the figure and became a good draughtsman. He painted three or four large historical compositions which attracted great notice, and in competition with Romney, in 1765, he gained the Society of Arts premium of one hundred guineas. He was looked upon as of much promise. Of a strong frame and handsome person, he affected a style of dress beyond his station, made acquaintance with some of the so-called wits upon the town, and, falling into glaring irregularities, ruined his health and neglected his art. His works in oil were badly painted, heavy and disagreeable in colour, and he abused the hours which should have been devoted to his improvement. His best works were his drawings; they could be sketched off with less study, and did not

much vary in subject; his favourite imaginings were strained imitations of Salvator Rosa—banditti, monsters, and such like. He was employed to design for Bell's *Poets*, Bell's *Shakspeare* and other works; and chose subjects of the class we have described, which were very unequal in their conception and design.

Mortimer is an example of talents abused and good intentions adopted too late. He had married a clever, respectable young girl, to whom he had been long attached; was beginning to lead a new life, devoting himself to his art; and had just gained his election as an associate of the Royal Academy in November, 1778, when shortly after he was seized with fever, under which his broken-down constitution succumbed, and he died in February, 1779, leaving little more than a name to the art of his country.

Of the painters to whom the new taste for book designs gave employment, while their works added a character to the publications of the time, we must distinguish two or three other artists. *Thomas Kirk*, who gained an early reputation as designer, miniature painter, and engraver, produced a few pastoral designs, and was noted for the elegance of his female figures. His chief works were for Cook's *Poets*, but his career in art was short yet of much promise. He died of consumption in November, 1797. *Richard Westall, R.A.* (B. 1765, D. 1836) has already been mentioned as a water-colour painter. He made many designs for books, and has been characterized as "great in little things." In such, his art seems truly to have found its best development. His illustrations for the Bible and the Prayer-Book were greatly admired, and so far suited the public taste as to become very popular,

and he made money, though he afterwards lost his savings by traffic in the works of the old masters. His female ideal, with great sameness, had great prettiness; his males were too much of the same character; they sadly lacked the manliness of the heroes they represented, and in both sexes the mannerism of the artist was always apparent. The illustrations to the *Arabian Nights* are Westall's best—the compositions are pleasing, the backgrounds and accessories good, and the Oriental character is not forgotten. His brother, *William Westall, A.R.A.*, who died in 1850, also found employment as a designer, chiefly in landscape, which he rendered with great fidelity and skill. *Robert Smirke, R.A.*, (B. 1752, D. 1845) is better known as a designer than as a painter, for though he painted many works from the poets and dramatists, they were designed with a view to engraving, and were most of them engraved; he also made many book designs. His best works possess a quiet refinement of original humour. *Don Quixote* was his favourite author, but he has given us many genuine, happy, humourous thoughts of his own, sometimes mingled with much sweetness, such as "The Pedagogue," "The Triumph of Poetry," and other works which have proved prolific subjects for the engraver.

Thomas Uwins, R.A., born in 1782, was apprenticed to an engraver, but quitting the graver on the end of his apprenticeship, he entered the Royal Academy as a student and became a designer for books, occasionally painting portraits. In 1808 he was employed upon a series of illustrations, chiefly a frontispiece and vignette for each work, and he also drew for Akermann's Repository. His works had been mostly in water-colour, and in 1809,

he was elected an associate of the Water-Colour Society, and in the following year a full member. The drawings he exhibited at the society were frames of designs suitable for book illustration, and rustic figures. His contributions to the Royal Academy were of the same class together with portraits. His employments, not his own will, seem to have shaped his career, and his works are conspicuous in the book illustrations of this time. In 1818 he suddenly resigned his membership and his office of Secretary in the Water-Colour Society. An officer of the Society of Arts for whom Uwins was security was a defaulter, and greatly to the hindrance of his professional advancement, he devoted himself to the drudgery of his art till he had honourably fulfilled his obligations. He visited Edinburgh and was successful in portraiture, chiefly in the chalk manner. He sought, as he himself says, by that means to escape from "the embarrassing little matters which occupied him in London, and which, though they scarcely enabled him to live, were sufficient to destroy his sight and give him a prospect of an old age of blindness." In 1824 he went to Italy, where he remained till 1831, gathering the materials for his future new career.

Up to this time, as we have shown, Uwins was a book-illustrator, and painted portraits when sitters offered. He did not seek re-admission to the Water-Colour Society, and its exhibitions are closed to the works of non-members. For seven years his labours had not been seen in our exhibitions, and now, when approaching his fiftieth year, he began to exhibit on the walls of the Royal Academy a series of pictures, whose inspirations were all of Italy, and at once established his

reputation as a painter, emancipating his art from the toils of his early life. His merits were at once acknowledged, he was elected an associate of the Royal Academy in 1833 and an Academician in 1838. Further honours were in store for him. The Queen appointed him Surveyor of her Majesty's pictures in 1845, and the national pictures were added to his charge in 1847. He died at Staines, where he had sought a quiet retirement, in 1857.

But we must retrace our steps to describe a new school of book illustration which sprung from the genius of one man, far from the metropolis and its art influences, and gave a great impetus to the embellishment of books, both by the original freshness of its art and the greater facilities of its process. The first book designs of our artists were engraved on copper and printed separately—the printing of the type and the designs by which it was to be illustrated being necessarily two distinct and separate processes, enhanced the cost, which was somewhat further increased in the stitching or binding by the mode of securing the engraving, so that the introduction of engravings entailed additional expense in the mere mechanical processes.

Thomas Bewick, born near Newcastle on Tyne in 1753, is said to have re-discovered the lost art of wood-engraving, and though we cannot assume that the art was lost, or that he preceded a French artist in its modern use, we may well attribute to Bewick the merit of having given to wood-engraving, by the impress of his own talent, a development it had never before known in England, and of having employed it in the illustration of books, printing his blocks at the same time and by the

same process as the metal type, and thus greatly economizing and facilitating book illustration. Apprenticed to an engraver in metal at Newcastle, who undertook every description of work, Bewick was after a time specially attracted to wood-engraving, which he made his peculiar study. On the completion of his apprenticeship he came to London, but he disliked the metropolis, and within about twelvemonths we find him again settled in Newcastle, and soon after in partnership with his old master; and there he passed the remainder of his life. In 1779 he engraved on wood the illustrations to *Gay's Fables*, which showed a great knowledge of his art, and in 1784, the *Select Fables*. Of these works all the parts were finished with great care, the animals well and characteristically drawn and with a spirit of nature new to wood-engraving.

After nearly five years' labour Bewick published in 1790 his *General History of Quadrupeds*, and such was its success, that in each of the two succeeding years it was followed by another edition. This work was also embellished with a number of small tail-pieces full of humourous idea and graphic satire. Then gratified by the popularity of this work, he began the designs and cuts for the *History of British Birds*, and in 1797 issued the first volume, comprising the land birds. His reputation both as a designer and engraver was spread far and wide, and in 1802 the water birds followed, completing the work. In these works Bewick carried the art to a higher pitch of excellence than it had ever before attained. His designs were the work of a naturalist and close observer, true to the habits as well as the forms of the animals he represented; his engravings are unsurpassed, both in the variety and truth of his feathery and furry tex-

tures as well as in the general finish of his background and accessories, his tail-pieces full of graphic fun and thought. But we must not say, as others have, that all was by his own hand. He was ably assisted by his brother John, and had the merit of establishing by his talented pupils a school of wood-engravers. Of these Robert Johnson, who unhappily died in his 26th year in 1796, designed many of the tail-pieces in the Birds, and the greater number of the illustrations of the Fables which were not published till 1818; and Luke Clennell, an artist of great powers, who died in 1840 after a long loss of intellect, engraved many of the illustrations to the Birds, and the majority of the tail-pieces in the second volume. Bewick died near Gateshead, in 1828.

Book illustration had fairly taken hold of the public mind, and the publishers did their best to pander to the public taste. In 1823, Akermann commenced an annual gift-book, *The Forget-me-not*,—a German notion, a series of pictures and tales. This was followed by a rival, *The Friendship's Offering*, and then a whole brood. *The Literary Souvenir*, *The Keepsake*, *The Amulet*, and in landscape art, *The Picturesque Annual*, *The Continental Annual*, *The Landscape Annual*, *Prout's Annual*, *Turner's Annual Tour*, till the number issued was above twenty, and found its climax in *The Flowers of Loveliness*, and *The Book of Beauty*. In these publications the order of proceeding was inverted; the painter did not embody the thoughts of the writer, but the writer was hired to fit a tale, in verse or prose, to the painter's invention. Art of all descriptions was at the same time seized upon by the publisher: old masters and moderns, countrymen and foreigners, all whose works were within reach; and

the engraver and the writer were set to work to make the book. The issue of the "Annuals" was an event, till a sudden collapse fell upon the whole, and the "Annual" is a stale thing of the past. We have nothing to say of the literature of these books, and very little of the art. Many really fine paintings were engraved, and some of the most talented engravers employed; but after all, the art was puerile and meretricious, and it is to be feared that the production of engravings of a higher class was checked, and that art suffered while thus held in durance by fashion.

Fickle fashion had smiled her short hour on these trifles; their rapid extension showed that a harvest was to be gathered, and no doubt the enterprise of the publishers was rewarded with large profits. Shortly after this another attempt was made in book illustration which claims its place in this chapter, the aim and object of which were entirely different—art, not gain, was the sole stimulus. Some young friends, studying side by side, seeking no further than to promote art and the love of etching, in 1838 formed themselves into a society, whose numbers have averaged twelve members, which they called the *Etching Club*. They framed a few simple rules, binding themselves to complete etchings at stated periods, and to meet at each other's studios in rotation. Their meetings were of a social character: a cup of tea, and then business. Works for illustration were discussed, the subjects were selected, and assigned to the members as their individual talents were most suited, while the arrangement of the work—requiring great judgment and taste—was delegated to a committee. Next, the etchings commenced or completed since the

previous meeting, were produced, were freely and boldly criticised; judgments were discussed, many of the etchings were passed from hand to hand with enthusiasm, and all the technical processes of etching keenly canvassed—laying grounds, biting in, re-biting, dry-point, burr, and every trick of the art. Supper followed, at first very simple, but growing, in spite of sumptuary regulations, more and more like a very late dinner, seasoned by all the gossip of art, and the Club songs, for the Club was not without a poetic member. Then, at an honest hour, and in honest condition, the members separated, usually with many promises not to fail to bring etchings to the next meeting. Such were the meetings of the Club.

The members were rising to reputation in their profession. They soon mastered the technicalities of etching, and produced some plates of great ability. Then they were tempted to try the illustration of a poem, and they chose the *Deserted Village* of Oliver Goldsmith. As we have shown, the judgment, taste, and skill of the whole Club were brought into play; and so much united ability had rarely been engaged in a similar undertaking. Their work, when published, secured great and honourable distinction. Her Majesty and the Prince graciously proffered their patronage and their subscriptions, and Thomas Hood wrote a laudatory article on the Club in *Blackwood's Magazine* for January, 1842. But the work was only for the few; the public did not understand etching, and not understanding, did not care for it. Third-rate engravings, in the hands of publishers who knew how to make their market, were sold till their plates were bare, and at twice the price of

the publications of the Etching Club; the one was nevertheless valueless as soon as issued, the other a rare work of art, which will yet be sought for as a treasure. It is strange that those who think themselves fortunate to possess the picture of a favourite painter, have not learnt to value a work by the same hand when holding the etching needle instead of the brush. For such we quote the opinion of Hood:—"Painters' etching is the free sketching of the artist, it is the very hand of his mind, if we may be allowed the expression. There are a thousand turns in the lines of original conceptions which the hand obeys, and the mind is unconscious of the operation; many are the passages from idea to idea ere there is completion, all of which have their traces in the mind and from the mind; and if their order can be rendered less evanescent, there will arise from their delineation great beauty, and a certain satisfaction from the obedience of the hand to the nicer variations of thought. There is therefore a peculiar power and beauty in painters' etchings, which are thought's autographs, which distinguish them from engravings of any kind; and it has often been a subject of regret to the lovers of art, that our painters have neglected so fascinating a mode of giving the very stamp and impression of their genius."

The club have published *The Deserted Village*, 1841; *The Songs of Shakspeare*, 1843; *Etched Thoughts*, 1844; *Gray's Elegy*, 1847; *L'Allegro*, 1849; *The Ballads of Shakspeare* (forming a second part of the *Songs*), 1852; *Etchings for the Art-Union of London*, 1857; and in 1865 *A Selection of Twelve Etchings*. These works are unique examples of book illustration—tasteful—a series

of pictures—the painter's freshest thoughts executed by his own hand. We have spoken of the Club in a past tense, but it still exists; and its members, not discouraged by the neglect of their etchings, continue to etch purely for the love of the art. The example, not the pecuniary success of the Club, led to the formation of a Junior Etching Club, which published illustrations of Thomas Hood's *Poems*, containing some excellent etchings. We regret that we cannot refer to some of the works of these two societies, which possess very high art merits, but living artists are without our pale.

Our work is confined to painting, yet we cannot close this chapter without mentioning, as intimately connected with it, the great school of engravers which grew up in England in the latter half of the eighteenth century, including many eminent artists whose names are an ornament to our pages. Among these men, Sir Robert Strange (B. 1721, D. 1792), William Sharp (B. 1749, D. 1824), William Woollett (B. 1735, D. 1785), John Hall (B. 1739, D. 1797), and James Heath (B. 1765, D. 1835), were distinguished by their engravings of the highest class in the line manner; and James M'Ardell (B. 1710, D. 1765), Valentine Green (B. 1739, D. 1813), John Raphael Smith (B. 1750, D. 1811), Richard Earlom (B. 1742, D. 1822), the two Watsons—Thomas (B. 1750, D. 1780), and James, his younger brother—and William Ward, A.R.A., who died in 1826, carried the art of mezzotint to a degree of excellence that stands unrivalled. Strutt, speaking of the art at the time these men flourished, says in the preface to his *Dictionary of Engravers*, 1785:—"Engraving was never more encouraged than at the present day, especially in England,

where almost every man of taste is in some degree a collector of prints." The English school can still honestly boast of its great living engravers, but they are without employment. While the love of art has undoubtedly spread, and artists have multiplied and prospered, the engraver's art alone is without encouragement. We do not impute this to lithography, photography, acierage, or any other means by which art is diffused, but to the system of sale which has been unscrupulously adopted by the speculative publishers. Their object is that a plate shall be so executed as to produce, not the finest work of art, but the greatest number of impressions. This is their first consideration. The term "proof," which formerly designated the few impressions taken off by the engraver to prove his work during its progress, and was afterwards extended to a very limited number of early impressions of the finest quality, now has no other meaning than the number of subscribers who can be induced to pay double price for a so-called proof impression; and to such an unconscionable length has this been carried, that plates have been known to have been worn out and retouched before the *proofs* subscribed for could be supplied. Collectors desire to possess what is choice and rare, and they have been exterminated by such practices. Men of taste do not now care to collect engravings; the art has deteriorated, and the greatest of our living engravers are neglected; while such engravings as we have described are spread broadcast, and large profits are realized, but they do not fall to the engraver.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WATER-COLOUR SOCIETIES.

No Means of exhibiting Water-Colour Drawings—Disadvantages under which they were seen at the Royal Academy—The Water-Colour Society established—Its Founders and their Objects—*William S. Gilpin*, the first President—Success of the Society—*John Claude Nattes*—Attempt to found a second Society—The original Society declines—Which leads to a Secession of Members—It is reconstituted, and admits Paintings in Oil—The Members revert to their original Constitution—Build a Gallery—Established Success—Opinion upon the Aims of the Society—And on its Influence upon Water-Colour Art—Preservation of Water-Colour Drawings—The new Society of Painters in Water Colours founded—Its Difficulties—And permanent Establishment—Named the Institute of Painters in Water Colours—Its Constitution and Laws—A third Water-Colour Exhibition opened—The Sketching Society.

In a previous chapter we have traced the growth of water-colour painting from the mere tinted imitations of our topographic draftsmen, and have shown the aids which in practice the art derived from the works of our early miniaturists, as well as its state of progress at the end of the last century. We purpose now to resume our account of this truly English art. Year after year the works of its Professors had increased on the walls of the Royal Academy, up to that time the only public exhibition; and though their art, while it advanced silently and imperceptibly, was still looked upon as trifling and insignificant by many, who using the more

powerful medium of oil, covered large canvases with works which, if not high in their aim, were, in the eyes of the public, grand, at least in their size.

Those who with ourselves remember the old rooms in Somerset House, will call to mind one on the lower floor, named in the catalogue the "Miniature Room," which when not used for the Exhibition was occupied as the Antique School. This room was lighted by three windows, the spaces between which were fitted up with huge projecting screens to accommodate the miniatures, at that time an important and attractive part of the annual exhibition. These projections, however, thoroughly darkened the other portions of the room, on which the water-colour paintings were usually arranged, and thus made it a really condemned cell for such pictures as found a place there. Nor was this space, bad as it was, devoted wholly to water-colour pictures, but above them were hung the refuse of the works in oil for which space could not be found in the top-lighted rooms; and these, by their very inferiority and coarseness, placed their unfortunate companions at a still greater disadvantage.

A writer who is quoted in the *Life of Thomas Uwins, R.A.*, describes an earlier state of things. He says, though we don't know of what year he writes:—"He is old enough to recollect the time when the council room of the Royal Academy was devoted to the exhibition of paintings in water colours. Here were to be seen the rich and masterly sketches of Hamilton; the fascinating compositions of Westall; the beautiful landscapes of Girtin, Callcott, and Reinagle; and the splendid creations of Turner, the mightiest enchanter who has ever wielded the magic power of art in any age or

country. At this time the council room—instead of being what the present arrangement makes it, a place of retirement from the bustle of the other departments—was itself the great point of attraction. Here crowds first collected, and here they lingered longest; because it was here the imagination was addressed through the means of an art which added the charm of novelty to excellence. It was the fascination of this room that first led to the idea of forming an exhibition entirely of pictures in water colours"—and when the council room was afterwards devoted to the presentation pictures of the members, and the water-colours were thrust into the outer darkness of the antique academy, the painter who valued his art naturally desired to find space for its better exhibition elsewhere.

A reference to the catalogues of the period will show the increasing number of the professors of the new art; and probably the journals of the day, though they did not trouble themselves much with art matters, would admit the usual amount of grumbling and dissatisfaction, both with and without reason, of the evil treatment of the works in water colours. The art was nevertheless growing in public estimation. Most of its professors were also teachers, and found opportunities of making their grievances directly known in influential quarters, and no doubt found encouragement in their plan of founding a society and exhibition of their own. Their art itself possessed an element of popularity in its agreeable facility of execution, the more convenient scale on which its best works were executed, and the lower rate of prices at which they were sold.

With such grounds of encouragement, and the dis-

advantage under which their works were seen at the Royal Academy, even if better space could have been afforded for their proper display, the water-colour painters wisely united to establish a new society wholly devoted to their own art. The originators and promoters were Hills, Pyne, Shelley, and Wills, who were afterwards joined by John Varley and Glover; and after some preliminary meetings at Shelley's house, in George Street, Hanover Square, at which the outline of the society was determined, a meeting was called; William S. Gilpin, who was invited to attend, took the chair; and the "Water-Colour Society" was founded on the 30th November 1804, the main features of which were the annual exhibition of original subjects in water colours, exclusively the works of the members, who were limited to twenty-four; the management to be in officers elected annually, but eligible for re-election. Subsequent meetings were held; the adhesion of others of the profession was gained, and the society, when constituted, consisted of the following sixteen members: all of whom at the time enjoyed distinction as painters in water-colours:—

George Barret,
Joshua Cristall,
William Sawrey Gilpin,
John Glover,
William Havell,
Robert Hills,
James Holworthy,
John Claude Nattes,
Francis Nicholson,
Nicholas Pocock,
William Henry Pyne,
Stephen Rigaud,
Samuel Shelley,
John Varley,
Cornelius Varley,
William Frederick Wills.

Their first exhibition was opened on the 22nd of April, 1805, with a collection of two hundred and seventy-five drawings, in the large room built by Vandergutcht, the engraver, in Lower Brook Street; the catalogue containing the announcement that, if successful, it was

intended to be annual. The following year the exhibition was held in the same room, and the members then stated that the very flattering reception of their first exhibition had encouraged them to open their second, and that their third would be held in the old Royal Academy Rooms in Pall Mall. Before their second exhibition, they had strengthened themselves by adding to their body eight "fellow exhibitors," the number of this rank being limited to twelve, who were to enjoy all the rights and privileges of the original founders. These eight were—

Miss Byrne,	Paul Sandby Munn,
John James Chalon,	Ramsay R. Reinagle,
William Delamotte,	Francis Stevens,
Robert Freebairn,	John Thurston,

and this second exhibition contained 301 drawings.

The third exhibition was held in 1807, in the proposed new rooms, and the catalogue, which had been hitherto included in the admission payment of one shilling, was now charged an extra sixpence, and John Smith, (known as Warwick Smith), Thomas Heaphy, and Augustus Pugin, joined the society. Gilpin, who had presided at the foundation meeting, was elected the first president, but he resigned in 1806. Pocock was then elected, and on his declining to serve, Wills was eventually chosen, though apparently only *pro tem.*, for, in 1807, Glover became the president. The ground assigned by Gilpin for resigning the office of president, was his retirement to Great Marlow. He had filled the office ably, and his services were highly valued; but his connection with the society proved very unfortunate. He was the son of Sawrey Gilpin, R.A., of whom mention has already been made, and probably by the name and influence of his

father, he had formed an extensive connection as a teacher, and gained a meretricious reputation. When, however, his works were, in the exhibition, placed in immediate contact with those of the true geniuses of the art, he failed in the comparison. He lost both his teaching and his rank as an artist, and withdrew early from the contest. Some others followed his example, while some were content to accept a second rank for the benefits they received as members. Gilpin appears to have been appointed a teacher of drawing at the junior branch of the Royal Military College then established at Great Marlow, and to have subsequently removed to the senior branch at Sandhurst. He was one of the members who seceded on the disruption of the society in 1813, but exhibited with the society in 1814 and 1815, when his name disappears, and we learn no further of him.

The exhibitions of the society at first proved a great success. Mr. Pyne, one of the foundation members, writes of the opening exhibition in the *Somerset House Gazette*, No. 9:—"The room was crowded by the first personages, who appeared emulous to become purchasers of the works exhibited for sale." And again:—"The Royal Academicians were foremost in crowding to the rooms, were among the first to applaud the undertaking, and unanimous, we have reason to believe, in wishing it success. Patronage and public favour has uniformly attended their exhibitions, and we may add, to the honour of the Royal Academy, that we have never heard it even whispered, that any member of that body was ever suspected of indulging a feeling of envy towards this new and successful institution." Several artists, by works of great merit, had first made

themselves known gaining much distinction, and the new exhibition and the new art were the talk of the town.

The profits of the exhibitions belonged to the members, and were apportioned *pro rata*, according to the selling price, which each was allowed to fix, of the works he exhibited, and which was not, therefore, so far, without some check. We find, however, that in carrying out this rule, Shelley, the miniature painter, was not allowed a share of the profits calculated on the miniatures he exhibited, and that, perhaps, a little annoyed by the decision—though it appears not an unreasonable one—he resigned in 1807 his office of treasurer, but not his membership; and further, that in the same year, Nattes was expelled the society, for having, with a view to the increased share of profits, exhibited in his own name, drawings not by his own hand. Of course, there was also the liability for losses, and on the election of Miss Byrne, lady members were gallantly exempted from contributions to such losses, and from the duties connected with the society, but these exemptions were afterwards rescinded. The society suffered no loss in Nattes. He was a mere topographer, and his drawings were weak and poor. He made the drawings for *Scotia Depicta*, and published, in 1806, a series of views under the title of *Bath Illustrated*. And this is all we now know of him.

In 1808 the society made another move, and held their Fourth Annual Exhibition at 16, Old Bond Street. In the following year, moving again, they held their fifth exhibition at the great room in Spring Gardens. We are told that the removal from Brook Street was in consequence of the smallness of the room; but we do

not learn the cause of the removals which followed, it seems to us, tempting the success the young society had achieved. In this last locality the society continued till 1813, holding five annual exhibitions. Meanwhile the number of its members was increased to twenty-five, and the society was strengthened by the admission of

John Augustus Atkinson,
William Turner (of Oxford),
Edmund Dorrell,
William Payne,
Thomas Uwins,
Charles Wild,
Peter De Wint,
Frederick Nash,
Copley Vandyke Fielding,
William Scott (of Brighton),
William Westall.

The new society was not long without rivalry. Its success had given a sudden impetus to water-colour art, and many talented men who were left outside, were by this exclusion placed at much disadvantage; they had only the condemned walls of the Royal Academy on which to compete with the advantages enjoyed by the members of the society. This led in 1808 to the formation of "The Associated Artists in Water Colours." The original members were:—

William Wood, *President;*
James Green, *Treasurer;*
Andrew Robertson, *Secretary;*
William James Bennett,
Henry P. Bone,
Alfred Chalon,
Mrs. Green,
J. Huet Villiers,
John Laporte,
Samuel Owen,
John Papworth,
Miss Emma Smith,
William John Thompson,
William Walker, jun.,
Walter Henry Watts,
William Westall,
H. W. Williams,
Andrew Wilson.

They opened their exhibition the same year, in the room—20, Lower Brook Street—that had been occupied by the original society, stating that, "In forming their exhibition they were not influenced by any sentiment of hostility or opposition" to that society, and that they were actuated alone by the motive which had prompted

its foundation, which they well described as, "The rapid advance which this class of art has made, its powers of reaching greater excellence if judiciously employed, and the propriety of separating drawings and pictures in water colours from the immediate contact of those produced in oil colours." The society was not exclusive, and strengthened its exhibition by the admission, we do not know upon what terms, of the works of other artists not members. We cannot now learn much of the society's proceedings, but we know that it was very short-lived—a result for which its members modestly provided by the announcement in their first catalogue that they "would listen with respectful deference to the public opinion, and repeat or withdraw their pretensions accordingly."

While the members of the Associated Society found themselves without support, the original society saw its interest rapidly declining. The writer, whom we have already quoted from the *Life of Mr. Uwins*, says, "The society had now existed eight years (1813). The exhibition was much more varied and interesting than it had ever been before; but the novelty was gone by, it had ceased to be fashionable. The doors were no longer crowded with carriages; and the works of the artists remained on the walls unsold. Spoiled with success, and panic-struck at this reverse of fortune, the members called a general meeting, at which it was agreed to dissolve the society. Twelve men more courageous than the rest, immediately united. These were Barret, Cristall, Fielding, Glover, Havell, Holworthy, Nicholson, Smith, William Turner, Uwins, Cornelius Varley, and John Varley." These artists then added to their number David Cox, Miss Gouldsmith,

Holmes, Linnell, Mackenzie, and Richter; and the exhibition was continued for two or three years with indifferent success. The seceding members opened in 1814 "An Exhibition of paintings in water colours" in New Bond Street, to which they invited the contributions of the artists of the United Kingdom, who were unconnected with any other society; but, so far as we can learn, this exhibition did not extend to a second year.

It is now difficult, when considering the very distinguished artists who were at that time members of the original society, and the fine works they were then producing, to account for its failure. The public were, we fear, unable to appreciate the high merit of their works, and they were patronized for a time as fashionable novelties, only to be neglected when fashion was tired of them. It is well that art now rests on a broader basis, though by fashion, or more frequently the speculations of dealers, artists occasionally obtain a false and ill-earned temporary reputation.

Among the seceding members were John Chalon, De Wint, Gilpin, Hills, Frederick Nash, Reinagle, and others. It was, no doubt, an effort to fill in the exhibition the gaps thus caused; and probably from this reason, as well as from Glover and some others having determined to paint in oil, the exclusive ground on which the society had been formed was abandoned; oil paintings, portraits, miniatures, and models were admitted; and artists who were not members of the society were invited to become "exhibitors." Upon this footing the society continued till 1821, when the lease of their premises in Spring Gardens expired, and their great room was pulled down. They then found

temporary accommodation in the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, where they exhibited in 1821 and 1822, and wisely reverted to their original constitution as a Society of Water-Colour Painters, exhibiting only the works of their own members. Up to this time the number of exhibitors, not members, had averaged about fifty, and in the preceding year had exceeded sixty. The members were now reduced to their own resources. They were, with four "associate exhibitors,"—

H. C. Allport,
George Barret,
Miss Byrne,
David Cox,
Joshua Cristall,
Copley Fielding,
Mrs. T. H. Fielding,
James Holmes,
Samuel Prout,
"
Augustus Pugin,
Henry Richter,
G. F. Robson,
John Smith,
James Stephanoff,
William Turner,
John Varley,
Charles Wild,

Shortly afterwards, Mr. Robson, one of the most zealous members, taking advantage of the alterations at Charing Cross, secured, on his own responsibility, the convenient premises the society now occupy in Pall Mall East. The first exhibition was opened there in 1823, and from that time there has, we believe, been no interruption to the continued and well-merited prosperity of the society. Its peculiar charm has always been the select character of its exhibitions, arising from their exclusiveness. In quantity and variety sufficient to satisfy without wearying—seen with comfort and ease—possessing a high average excellence with no offence to a cultivated taste or judgment—the mind neither distracted by crude and presumptuous attempts, nor oppressed by a multitude of mediocre works, and the labour of selection. At the same time the society owes nothing to the State. It

enjoys no privileges other than those it has established by its own merits; and it is free to employ its revenues, as it has the full right to do, in the exclusive promotion of the interests of the society and of its own members. Yet it no less enjoys a public recognition and importance.

It must nevertheless be owned that there are some elements of selfishness in the constitution of the society. We pass over the fact that no provision is made for instructing the juniors of the profession, which is perhaps wisely left to the individual action of master and pupil, or to that general nursing-mother, the Royal Academy; but we think some arrangement might have been made, if not at the spring exhibition, at some other period of the year, to bring the young and struggling water-colour painter before the public, by opening an exhibition for his works conjointly with those of the members. Not only would this have been a generous concession, but it would have given the society a knowledge of the rising men, and might have prevented, perhaps, the few mistakes it has made in its elections. The young painters in this medium were subjected to hardships from which their young rivals in oil were exempted. They had to put up with the insufficient accommodation offered by the Royal Academy, and to submit to have their pictures placed with strong and coarser works in oil, with architectural diagrams, or with engravings, according as room could be found for them; and under all these disadvantages to make their position good before the world and their brother artists, before there was any chance of being elected to the rights and privileges of the society. It is true that this selfish constitution has been, in a worldly view, a wise one. There has been

no outcry about rejected pictures, bad hanging, or non-election of men of merit; no question about the application of the profits of the society; no outcry about insufficient teaching; to all which the Royal Academy, with its nobler system of instructing those who will become the future rivals of its members, and aiding them to exhibit their talent to the world, and prove their claims to public recognition, has been from the first constantly subjected.

Some modifications in the practice of water colours have arisen from the regulations of the society which call for notice. Thus with the desire to emulate the force and power of works in oil, the members of the society made it an absolute rule that all works exhibited should be framed close, instead of being mounted with a margin of white or toned paper between the picture and its gold frame. This has gradually induced an effort after increased force of colour by the use of solutions of gum, of silica, and other varnishes. We have heard that at one time John Varley sought to introduce a water-colour varnish, and that Joshua Wallis was rejected by the society because he persisted in its use. Be this as it may, the use of gummy solutions to strengthen and give force to the darks of the picture, has certainly been promoted by the law of close framing. This system of strong and forced contrasts in water-colours is the very reverse of that followed by the greatest master of the art—J. M. W. Turner. He sought in that medium the means of imitating the infinitely delicate gradations of tint and colour in nature, so difficult to be obtained in the coarser medium of oil, which, from the colour contained in the vehicle itself, does not allow the same scale of gradations when used

transparently, and in which medium the coloured pigment when used solidly, is necessarily changed and weakened when made into tints by the admixture of white. This latter practice—the use of white, a necessity in oil, but in water colours wholly rejected except in sketching, by Turner and by the older members of the society, who had recourse to every expedient to avoid it. Under the new system of painting its use has so much increased that many of our modern artists seem to have again reverted to the methods of the tempera painters.

This search after *force* has also led to the use of pigments tempered in their preparation with honey, glycerine, and other materials to keep the colours in a somewhat moist state. These various modes of preparing the pigments, no doubt give great facility in execution, and temporary power and brilliancy to water colours; but do they not contain also the seeds of decay? They invite the attacks of insects, and even under the most favourable circumstances, changes of atmosphere tend to produce mouldy and fungoid growths on the gummed surface, and generally to give a dingy and scumbled appearance to the darks; while in any really damp situation, or under circumstances of neglect, the deterioration is often most rapid. After all, it is more than doubtful whether the brilliancy induced by contrast with the white mount is not greater than the apparent force obtained by close framing. The mounting increases the importance of the drawing; from which cause, perhaps, most dealers and collectors change close framing to mounting when works come into their possession, and the *mat* mount certainly is a great preservative, whether works are kept in folios or under glass, as it tends in this case to keep the paintings away

from one another, or from the glass. This is important, as some glass, which has an over-dose of alkali in its manufacture, is apt to form small crystals on the surface, while in other glass an over-dose of lead exudes, to the great injury of colours with which it may happen to come in contact. Of course, greater exhibition space is obtained by close framing, but it can hardly be thought that this was contemplated by the society in determining their regulations.

Again, in the earlier days of the society, when individual members often contributed thirty, forty, or even fifty works to the annual exhibition, it is evident that many of them were mere studies,—drawings executed before pupils, and completed with a view to sale, small in size, and detracting from the general effect and importance of the exhibition as a whole. This no doubt led to another regulation of the society. Certain large frames were procured, and the members in rotation were required to prepare works to fill them, a premium being awarded to the painters, with the advantages of central and distinguished places for their works. This no doubt was of great importance to the general appearance of the annual exhibition, and may have been useful also in obviating the tendency to littleness and prettiness which is inherent in the art; but in weak hands it exposed its inherent weakness also. Devoid of the impasto of oil, and the large handling and bold execution which that medium admits of, and indeed requires in all large works, water-colour painting is necessarily circumscribed in its powers, and in the size of the works which may be safely executed by its means. Moreover, these large frames, coming in rotation to the weak as well as to the strong

members of the body, to men whose best art was small, as well as to those whose manner was naturally bold and large, the large works demanded to fill them were too often weak "compositions," a small amount of thought spread over a large surface of paper; and thus a certain tameness and inanity was too often the result, while the effort after size grew in the school, and also tended to bring about all that search after new media, new vehicles, new papers, and new modes of achieving force, contrast, and impasto, to which we have already alluded. While, therefore, we are willing to allow that, on the whole, the practice has tended to enlarge the powers of the art, it has been, we think, at the sacrifice of some of those more refined qualities which are its own peculiar charm.

The society by its elections has always wisely endeavoured to include men whose practice of the art is varied. Landscape painters, animal painters, figure and subject painters are among its members. By its judicious selection it has, since it moved into its present home, gone on in an uninterrupted course of prosperity, its exhibitions always attractive, the sale of the works constant. The only change being the gradual loss of its old members by death, and the rising of a new race, differing—as we have shown, and as is right—from the old in their views of art, in their methods of execution, their choice of subjects, as well as in their modes of imitating nature. We who live in remembrance of some of the glories of the early exhibitions, may at times feel a lingering regret at the change; but a candid consideration of the present state of the art leads us to the conclusion that, though changed, the talent of the living painters quite supports

the reputation achieved for the society by those who have passed away.

It has always been the policy of the society to absorb the rising talent of the water-colour school, and by this means to maintain its general superiority: as any new genius arose, he was at the first opportunity elected an associate exhibitor, and finally, a member of the society. But it was also found advisable to limit the number of members; and as the time arrived when the spread of art rendered it impossible, under this condition, to admit many men whose talent could not be questioned, a powerful body remained outside. This led in 1831 to the foundation of "The New Society of Painters in Water Colours," which in 1833 took the name of "The Associated Painters in Water Colours."

The causes were the same as those which induced the formation of the original society; the mode of proceeding, and the difficulties to be encountered, also the same. At a meeting of the artists interested, a committee was appointed to determine and carry out the scheme. The first trouble, under which former attempts had failed, was to provide for the immediate expenses and liabilities. This was temporarily met by a contribution from each member, aided by some donations and annual subscriptions; and by the same means a small Prize Fund was raised to reward the most successful exhibitors. By the constitution of the society the exhibitions were liberally declared open to all who were not members of the other art societies; but it was soon found that while many shared the proposed advantages, those who had become the members were solely responsible, and they were in 1834

required to make good a deficiency which had then arisen.

This led in 1835 to a reconstruction of the society, which took a new form. Twenty-eight artists were then elected members. They wisely gave up all subscriptions, and with proper self-reliance took upon themselves all liabilities, and opened an exhibition of their own works, with those only of four outside artists whom they invited to contribute as "Exhibitors." They held their exhibition in a room at Exeter Hall, and from this time the society dates its existence. It did not, however, maintain the limit it had fixed to its number of members, for we find that from 1837, in which year it held its fourth annual exhibition in Pall Mall, its numbers, with some slight fluctuations, gradually increased, till they reached fifty in 1846, and, continuing to increase, fifty-eight in 1856. Meanwhile the society encountered varying fortunes; the committee incurred much loss in the first instance, and the resolution that their advances to meet liabilities should be replaced before any accruing profits were divided, not only caused the secession of some old members, but stood in the way of others whose election would have strengthened the society.

Some other changes appear to have been made in 1859. The society was divided into thirty members, ten lady members, and eighteen associates, and in this form it continued for the three following years. There was sufficient talent to constitute and support the two societies, and the younger had succeeded in establishing itself firmly in reputation, attended, we trust, by pecuniary success. The members built themselves a

handsome gallery on the site they had occupied in Pall Mall since 1837, and in 1863 again remodelled their constitution, and enlarged the number of their members, taking the name of "The Institute of Painters in Water Colours."

The society now comprises forty members, with an unlimited number of associates, who are alone eligible for election as members. The funds of the society are vested solely in the members; they arise from the admissions to the exhibition, the profits upon the sale of catalogues, and a commission upon the sale of exhibited works, of five per cent. from the members, and ten per cent. from the associates, the latter sharing none of the responsibilities of the society. The elections are by ballot, the candidates being proposed and seconded by members. To provide for any outstanding liabilities, any member or associate quitting the society without consent, is liable to a fine of 20*l*. Thus the new society, probably compelled by circumstances, was led to abandon its original form of a free exhibition, and like the parent society, to close its doors to the works of all artists not of its own body; and without any pretensions to public uses divided any accruing profits among its own members. Its most distinguished members still happily survive to add interest to its exhibitions, and are thus without the bounds of our criticism.

While we write another exhibition of water-colour art has been formed. The two existing societies, as we have described, receive the works of their own members exclusively. The space which the Royal Academy is able to devote to water-colour drawings becomes every

year less and less, and the number practising the art, both professionally and as amateurs, is rapidly increasing. This state of things led to the opening, in the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, in the spring of 1865, of a third water-colour exhibition, styled "The General Exhibition."

A committee was formed, not exclusively of artists, which was readily supported by a list of guarantors, sharing the pecuniary responsibility. The ostensible intention was declared to be "to establish a gallery which, while exclusively devoted to drawings, in distinction from oil paintings, should not in its use by exhibitors involve membership of a society." The promoters had well understood the wants of the water-colour painters. Their scheme was well received, and their committee deluged with the works sent in for exhibition. A selection of 519 drawings, the contributions of 240 exhibitors, formed a very excellent exhibition, including many works of great originality and merit; and the success of the first year was so assured that we trust, both in the interests of the artists and the public, the exhibition will become a permanent institution. We are not, however, aware in what way the profits will be disposed of. This is no society bearing its own risk—no small body of artists exhibiting their own works; the only persons who appear ostensibly are the committee and the "promoters," the latter being in fact the former.

We have attempted only such a sketch of the water-colour societies, in connection with water-colour art, as was essential to the completeness of the plan of our work; but we are gratified to learn that Mr. Jenkins, the late secretary of the Water-Colour Society, has long

been engaged in collecting materials for a work which shall do full justice to this subject.

Some account of "*The Sketching Society*" cannot be omitted, and it connects itself most appropriately with the subject of this chapter. Its professed object was the study of epic and pastoral design, with which, in practice, good-fellowship and the love of art-gossip were largely associated. The idea arose with the two Brothers Chalon and Francis Stevens. The Society was founded on the 6th January (Twelfth-day), 1808. The rules were simple: the number of members was limited to eight, and the president had the privilege of introducing one visitor. They met at each other's houses in rotation weekly, during the season; the host of the evening being the president, and privileged to name the subject, which, after a cup of tea or coffee, he announced, and at eight o'clock the members commenced their impromptu designs. Then, after two hours so employed, at ten o'clock, the members sat down to supper—at first a very simple repast, but, as in all like cases, by degrees so luxurious that attempts were made to restrain it by sumptuary laws. After supper, the president submitted each member's sketch for criticism and judgment. The first members were (in the order of precedence determined by lot) William Turner of Oxford, Alfred Edward Chalon, Thomas Webster (the author of *Elements of Science and Art*), Michael Sharp, Francis Stevens, Cornelius Varley, John James Chalon, with Henry P. Bone, added at the second meeting.

The subjects selected were of the most varied character; above one hundred were from the Bible. History, the drama, the poets and novelists were ransacked;

subjects admitting the most varied treatment, grave or comic, "Pride," "Vanity," "Humility," representations of all the passions and emotions, "Elegance," "Grace," "A Great Shame," "*A Déjeûner sans Fourchette*," "A Love Affair," "What you Like," "What you Will," "What you Please." Sometimes the subject had a direct reference to the Society's incidents, as on the evening of Partridge's resignation, "A Disaster;" on Leslie's arrival from America, "The Return." On two occasions the Queen, who felt great interest in the works of the Society, sent them sealed subjects, "Desire" and "Elevation." Of the after-supper criticism, there are yet those—far from young men by the way—who can tell of the good-natured puns and wit in which it was conveyed; the merry quips and cranks in which truths were told, and many grave meanings and true art-judgments given. Then the Society had a day's holiday. They went to Windsor, Hampton Court, Richmond, Cashiobury, or some other chosen point, where some choice object of art or nature might be found, which, followed by a convivial dinner, formed the enjoyment of that day and the talk of many more.

The Society had been reduced by death and defection to the Chalons, Stump, and Bone; but in 1829 it was filled up, and we find again the eight members, who in the order of their election were—Alfred Chalon, John Chalon, Stump, Bone, Uwins, Clarkson Stanfield, Leslie, and Partridge; to whom had been added three honorary members in the persons of Joshua Cristall, C. J. Robertson, and G. F. Robson.

We are not aware that the pleasant party was again recruited. The members grew old together; their remi-

niscences had become traditional, their witticisms their own. Younger men must have been out of place and strange, however warm their welcome; and thus after a long existence, an union of art and friendship, by the infirmities of some and the deaths of others, the Society, in its fortieth year, quietly ceased to exist in 1848. The sketches made at the house of each member in succession became his property, and it was contrary to the rules of the Society to alienate them in any way; but in the last few years they have found their way into the auction-room and the shops of the dealers, where some have realized large prices.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FOUNDERS OF THE WATER-COLOUR SOCIETY.

George Barret—Trials of his early Life—His Beginnings in Art and patient Labours—Poetic Treatment of Landscape—Death—*John Varley*—His early Life—Character of his first Drawings—His numerous Contributions to the Exhibitions—His Enthusiasm—And Anecdotes of him—Astrological Predictions—*William Henry Pyne*—His Art Publications—And Literary Works—*Robert Hills*—Animal Painter—Opinions upon his Art—His numerous Etchings—*Joshua Cristall*—His Birth—And Love of Art—Difficulties under which he first painted—Description of his Works—And Estimate of his Merits—*John Glover*—His early Art—Gains a great Reputation—Emigrates to Australia—*William Havell*—Receives a good Education—Secret Devotion to Art—His early Works—Visits China and India—Returns to London—Finds himself left behind in Art—His real merits—*Francis Nicholson*—Little known of his early Career—Begins Art in London—His Process of Painting—Devotes himself to Lithography.

In previous chapters we have traced the origin of water-colour art in this country, the progress it made under its first professors, and the institutions established for its promotion. In the chapters on miniature painting and book illustration, we have treated of the works of those whose art more especially took one or other of these directions. This chapter we purpose to devote exclusively to the distinguished men who were the founders of the Water-Colour Society. They all began and ended their career as painters in water colour, and whether as painters of landscape, landscape and figures, or as animal painters, each established a manner

peculiarly original, and his own; each was as unlike the other, and as distinct in his treatment of nature, as in his modes of execution. We do not know how to assign a due precedence, and have therefore spoken of them in chronological order.

George Barret was the son of the landscape painter of the same name, who was distinguished in his day, and was one of the foundation members of the Royal Academy. Notwithstanding the large income the father made by his art, on his death in 1784, he left a large family in great difficulties, and dependent upon the charitable funds of the Academy. The son must have been very young when his father died. We can find no trace of the date of his birth, or of his first beginnings in art, but he did not exhibit till 1795, eleven years after his father's death. His first pictures were a view of a gentleman's seat in Yorkshire, and a scene on Loch Lomond, followed next year (1796), by a view of Lord Grantley's seat, the horses by Sawry Gilpin, and a scene in the Highlands, the portraits by Reinagle, the horses again by Gilpin.

The young painter evidently began life surrounded with troubles. The assistance of the Academy was not limited to pecuniary contributions, for we see, in the co-operation of artists of eminence, instances of friendly help which sought no pay, and in the many commissions which he received to paint gentlemen's seats, chiefly in Scotland, evidence of many kind introductions, while we also trace in the Academy catalogues the sympathy felt by the profession for the young fatherless family. In 1797, Miss M. Barret, his sister, exhibited two miniature portraits, and gave her address at Mr. Romney's

the painter's in Cavendish Square; in 1799, she exhibited four miniature portraits, and in 1800 the portraits of the Duke of Northumberland and his family in miniature—commissions which were assuredly not gained without friends.

Barret continued to labour with patient exertion—and to exhibit one or two works yearly at the Royal Academy up to 1803; but in that and the two following years we miss his name in the catalogue. In 1805 he joined the Society of Painters in Water Colours on its formation, and from that time his chief works appear on the walls of the society, though he occasionally sent a picture, sometimes a painting in oil, to the Royal Academy. He was of frugal and industrious habits, and though poor, he aimed more at excellence in his art than gain. Though an unremitting exhibitor at the Water-Colour Society during thirty-eight years, his pictures did not average fifteen yearly. These were mostly effects of light, sun-set, evening, the mists of sunrise, moonlight, twilight; many of which subjects were sought on the Thames, and in the picturesque environs of the Metropolis. He painted a few, but very few scenes in Wales, and on the Sussex coast; but born in Paddington, he lived all his days there, and seldom wandered far to find his subjects, or seek his inspirations in art.

In 1830, and again in 1831, he painted a subject in conjunction with Cristall, and in 1834-35 and 36 several pictures with Mr. F. Tayler, now president of the society. His works were classic in feeling, and poetic in their treatment. Even the "views" by his hand are so subjected to the *treatment* adopted—the hour and the

time, the flood of sunlight, the mists of morn or dewy eve, as to render that ideal, which in other hands would be merely prosaic and commonplace. Latterly his pictures were mostly "compositions," in which, if we trace the influence of Claude and Poussin, it is so subjected to the painter's own feeling, as not to deprive his works of their originality. Extended landscapes, with ruins and rocks, wood and water, a few goats in the foreground tended by a goatherd, the whole bathed in the hazy atmosphere of the declining sun; or groves of massive trees, their dark stems and the deep shadows on the grassy floor beneath them, contrasted with the sunny glade beyond, figures seated in the broad shade, and partaking of the hue of the pervading gloom,—such were the themes he latterly delighted in. A certain solemn monotony of colour pervaded his pictures, necessitated by the effect he sought to produce, and removing the subjects quite out of the region of the imitative or the meretricious. His works require careful conservation, as they are inclined to fade if too much exposed, but they will always be esteemed since they occupy a field the painter made his own.

Barret was of a liberal nature, and, struggling with difficulties himself, endeavoured to clear them from the path of others. We well remember in our student days, his being questioned by a group of young artists, in what was then called the Angerstein Gallery where he was copying a picture, as to his mode of painting. He willingly explained to them his practice, and declared that no good painter ought to have "secrets." "Every thing is in the painter's feeling," said he; "without feeling, all the secrets in the world are worthless."

He died in 1842, some time before May, we gather, but no particulars of his private and professional life were made known; a long illness, the loss of his eldest son just growing into manhood, added to pecuniary embarrassments, we fear, hastened his death, and probably the dark shadows by which his latter days were surrounded, prevented any published notice of his life. He left a widow, a daughter, and two sons, and some artist friends raised a subscription to assist the widow and daughter. His poetry was not confined to his pencil. Of the pictures exhibited by him the year he died, one was "Thoughts in a Churchyard," from a poem by the artist, with this quotation—

> "'Tis dusky eve, and all is hush'd around,
> The moon sinks slowly in the fading west;
> The last gleam lingers in the sacred ground
> Where those once dear for ever take their rest."

John Varley, also one of the original founders, was born in London on the 17th August, 1777, in the neighbourhood of Hoxton or Hackney. His father objected to the lad's taking up art as a profession; he thought it a bad business, and declared none of his children should follow it. But the stars disposed otherwise. John was sent on *liking* to a silversmith, with the intention to bind him apprentice to that trade. But the father's death intervening, he managed to free himself from the engagement, and was able to obtain some employment—we hardly know what it could be—with a portrait painter. As he advanced in years he grew a strong and resolute youth, able to endure much fatigue of body and mind, and went to work when about sixteen with an architectural draughtsman. Young Varley had to be at the office at eight o'clock every morning, and

the work of the day was very trying; yet such was his enthusiasm for art, and his desire to improve himself, that when daylight permitted, he always had two hours sketching in the morning before proceeding to his office, the carts and barrows in the streets, and the characteristic figures with which at that early hour they are peopled, forming subjects for his pencil. With his master he made a journey to sketch the principal buildings in the towns they visited, and gained some credit for a view of Peterborough Cathedral. This he exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1798, which is the first time his name occurs in the catalogue.

He was one of the class of young painters that met continually at the house of Dr. Munro in the Adelphi, and was consequently early thrown into the company of the two rising water-colour painters, Turner and Girtin, the latter of whom Varley took for his model; and the impression Girtin made upon him lasted through life, rather leading Varley to disparage the art of his other companion Turner. Dr. Munro invited Varley to visit him at Fetcham, and many sketches in that neighbourhood were the result of his visits. In 1799 he exhibited at Somerset House three pictures, one of them Chingford Church, Essex, a drawing which is now in the possession of his son. In this year Varley made a sketching tour in North Wales, in company with George Arnold, the landscape painter, who afterwards became an associate of the Academy. Here Varley had found the true field for the exercise of his art. He made numerous sketches and studies of the mountain scenery, revisited Wales in 1800, and again in 1802, and afterwards, Northumberland, Yorkshire, and other parts of England. In 1800

he exhibited a view of Conway, and in 1801, with two other paintings, a view of Cader Idris; this is probably the faded work now at South Kensington.

After Varley's first visit to Wales, we trace him yearly, up to 1804, exhibiting at the Royal Academy two or three drawings,—views at Conway, Aberystwith, Llangollen, Cader Idris, Harlech, Snowdon; and in England, views of York, Chester, Nottingham Castle, Suffolk, and Ragland Castle. In the last-named year we find no less than four Varleys—we believe all brothers—exhibiting at the Royal Academy. John, of whom we are writing; Cornelius, who became a member of the Water-Colour Society, and still survives; William, who early lost his sight from an injury, and died in 1856; and S. Varley, whose works and story are unknown to us. Art is not often hereditary; but here we have a proof that it sometimes runs in a family, and that, notwithstanding a parent's disapproval and dislike.

In 1803, John Varley married one of three sisters who all became the wives of men of reputation. One married Muzio Clementi of musical celebrity, and the founder of a large pianoforte manufactory. The other, Copley Fielding, the president of the Water-Colour Society. Varley exhibited at the Royal Academy, in 1804, the last time for a long term of years. On the foundation of the Society of Painters in Water Colours, he joined them, and to their first exhibition, in 1805, he sent forty-two paintings, entirely Welsh subjects, except four or five, which were Yorkshire views. In the following year he contributed the same number of works, some of them styled compositions, many, no doubt, hasty works done as lessons before pupils. In 1807, he exhibited

thirty-four paintings; in 1808, fifty-two; and in 1809, sixty paintings. The subjects in these two latter years were a little more varied: "Suburbs of an Ancient City," "Gleaners Returning Home," "A Thunder-storm," &c. In 1810, 1811, and 1812, he exhibited respectively, forty-six, twenty-five, and thirty-three paintings; in all, no less than 344 works in eight years, showing rapidity and application, but leading to sad repetitions of manner and subject. What wonder that there are so many inferior works by his hand, and that he became insipid and commonplace! He searched the prints and etchings of the old masters for portions to introduce into his compositions, and repeated his sketches with varied stock foregrounds. Nevertheless, when he laid himself out to do his best, and when he studied his subjects on the spot, his pictures have qualities that we find in no other painters,—freshness, clearness, largeness of manner, and a classical air, even in the most common and matter-of-fact subjects.

Several paintings, of about this period, made on the banks of the Thames, and evidently worked on the spot, are of this character. From the place where Vauxhall Bridge now stands to Ranelagh was then a very rural district; on one side of the narrow road-way, the clear, bright, unpolluted Thames; on the other, rows of pollard willows, fringing ditches and backwaters, draped with a redundant weedage. Here and there a rural tavern, with smokers seated under rudely constructed arbours, with the Thames winding away to Chelsea and Battersea; or a rude, picturesque wharf, with—in the far-away distance—mills and steeples. Of this neighbourhood Varley painted several views, studying them on the spot.

One or two are now in the possession of his son. They have greater individuality and truth than his more aspiring compositions. But Varley married, with a family growing up around him, was obliged to work for the dealers, and at dealers' prices, and the natural result was weakness and commonplace.

In 1813, a change was made in the constitution of the Water-Colour Society, and several of the old members seceded; but Varley was not of these. He clung to it through all its vicissitudes and changes, and sent twenty-two drawingsto the exhibition, and the next year twenty-four. Of these latter, and among his drawings exhibited in the two succeeding years, were several Spanish views and scenes from drawings made by Captain Dumaresque and other officers. From this time also his contributions to the exhibitions were fewer, and some of his most careful and best works were now produced. In 1821, when the society resumed its original character, and limited its exhibitions to water-colour drawings by its own members, Varley sent only three works for exhibition. But one of these was painted on the receipt of the "annual premium given to induce the artist to undertake a work of elaborate composition for the ensuing exhibition," and was important at least as to size. The subject was "A Scene from the *Bride of Abydos*," to which further importance was given in the catalogue by an extract from Byron's poem, covering two pages.

Then for a time the number of Varley's exhibited drawings increased. In 1822 he finished his "Destruction of the City of Tyre," probably moved by Martin's "Fall of Babylon and Belshazzar's Feast," and at the same time exhibited many scenes in Wales, and "com-

positions." In the succeeding years he fell back upon views in Greece, Turkey, and other parts of the East, from sketches made by Rennie and others. From 1830 to 1840, there were, on an average, about seven pictures by him in each year's exhibition. But in 1841 he exhibited thirty, and in 1842 forty-one drawings. All his latter works were chiefly "compositions"—mountain scenes, produced from a trained memory without direct reference to nature—and far from possessing the qualities found in the works of his middle period, his views on the banks of the Thames in particular, which were studied, if not finished, direct from nature.

From the opening of the Water-Colour Society, Varley ceased to exhibit at the Royal Academy, and up to 1825 no work of his appeared on the Academy walls. In that year he is again an exhibitor, and with the exception of three years only, he was a regular contributor to the time of his death. One or two of his works were, we believe, in oil, and of these his picture of "The Lake of Killarney from Innisfallen," in 1830 was one. His last work was a drawing from the well-known Cedar-trees in the Botanical Gardens at Chelsea, which are seen from the Thames in all their funereal grandeur. He had suffered from an affection of the kidneys, and probably allured by a remembrance of the old trees, he sat down to sketch them and had a relapse. He was unable to reach home, and died in a friend's house on the 17th November, 1842.

Varley was a great enthusiast in all he undertook, and, like all enthusiasts, communicated the feeling to those around him: many stories are told in illustration; among others, that being engaged to teach in Bedford

Square, not only his pupils painted, but the very servants took brush and paper to try their skill at landscape painting. Varley knocking at the door on one occasion, was delayed a minute or two, and on the servant opening it, the painter found that the delay had been occasioned by John's being engaged, at the moment, washing in a sky at the hall table; the work did not please Varley, so he stopped on his way to the parlour, seized the brush, and immediately began to exemplify the necessary changes in the work before him.

He was very kind to young artists, often giving them gratuitous instruction; lending and even giving them drawings and sketches. Of the value of this instruction, we have the best evidence in the artists he formed. W. Hunt and W. Turner of Oxford, together with John Linnell, Samuel Palmer, and Oliver Finch, were his pupils; the two former—if not the latter—having been apprenticed to him. A man who could turn out three such pupils as Hunt, Linnell, and Palmer, must have had something to teach as well as a good method of imparting knowledge.

From his pictures we should say that Varley was a perfect master of the rules of composition, and applied them in his best works with great genius—perhaps relying too much on them in his mere stock-in-trade drawings. Many pithy sayings remembered by his pupils, clearly inculcate art truths. Thus his remark that "Nature wants cooking," no doubt implies in a terse way that the painter must not take Nature merely as he finds her, but, by selection and arrangement, must make her palatable. Again, he would say, "Every picture ought to have a look-there!" a point of interest

to which the eye should at once be carried—something that having impressed itself upon the painter's mind, it was his business to impress also upon the spectator. He used jokingly to say that every landscape ought to compose in the form of a cross; perhaps implying the predominance of some object in the foreground on one side of the picture, over every object on the other side. Some one, taking him too literally, objected that there were subjects in nature in which this was an impossibility, and made a rude sketch of Waterloo Bridge with the shot tower rising high above it, remarking triumphantly, "Where is the cross in this composition?" "Ah," said Varley, quietly, "you have forgotten the reflection in the water," and taking the pencil, he dashed in the dark under the tower, and the cross was complete. He likened the deliberate progression of oil painting to philosophy, while water-colour painting was, he said, to be assimilated to wit, which loses more by deliberation than is gained in truth.

Varley was a man of large, liberal, and genial character, full of conversation on many topics, brilliant on all, witty in his command of apt analogies. One who was his pupil writes, "I scarcely remember any man upon whom we might make a call with more certainty of half-an-hour's refined amusement and instruction;" and his wife adds, "he was very kind to children, taking great interest in their childish attempts. I remember him with his laughing, rosy, good-natured face, telling his stories to my father and to the delighted wonderment of his children." In the latter part of his life, he fell into difficulties arising from the bad management of his

household, and not in any way from extravagance, self-indulgence, or indolence on his part, for he was ever temperate, energetic, and a hard-worker. "Sometimes that he might get on with his work," says a friend, "his dinner was sent into his study. There lay together in a pleasant confusion, 'curious books,' deep twilights, and fruit pie; a bit snatched now and then in the intervals of very solemn talk about tolling curfews, setting moons, or Macbeth's castle in its *inspissated gloom.*"

Varley said his domestic difficulties, which would have worried any other man into his grave, were beneficial to him, as just preventing him from being *too* happy. The Vicar of Wakefield had a pleasant way of getting rid of troublesome poor relations, by lending them a great coat or an umbrella, which the Vicar knew would secure their absence for the future. Varley had an equally original way of getting paid by rich, but forgetful debtors,—a way he used to say which saved the unpleasantness of law. "I send in a new bill," said the painter, "making a mistake in the amount of a guinea or two *against myself*, and the money comes in directly." Every one who has heard anything of Varley has heard of his enthusiasm for astrology; there is no doubt he was shrewd enough to see, as indeed he was candid enough to own, that his astrology was one of the great causes of his popularity as a drawing-master. "Ladies come to take drawing lessons," said he, "that they may get their nativities cast," but there is no doubt also that he was to a certain point sincere in his belief of his astrological powers, and many curious coincidences between his predictions and the event are related by his friends

and pupils. We have told how he predicted the marriage of Sir Augustus Callcott, and he seems also to have cast the nativity of Cotman; who, by the way, was as eccentric as Varley, and a man of genius also. Varley calling one day to inquire about his friend, who was very ill, learnt that the doctor had given him over and that he was dying; to which he replied, "Nonsense, he won't die these ten years," and, taken into the sick man's room, he addressed him: "Why, Cotman, you are not such a fool as to think you are dying? No such thing, the stars tell another story," and his friend recovered. Mr. Linnell mentions that one day the stars revealing to Varley that he was in danger from *water*, he would not go out, thinking it safest to remain in the house; but, towards evening, he fulfilled the prediction by falling over a pail of water and wounding his leg. A friend introduced a young artist to Varley—an utter stranger—and the painter at once proceeded to cast his nativity: "Some very unpleasant affair must just have happened to you, some disagreement with a man of florid complexion, light sandy hair, &c.," and the stranger looked utterly astonished, for he owned that Varley was accurately describing a man with whom he had just quarrelled.

It is said that he was thrice burnt out of his house, and that on one of these occasions, instead of exerting himself to remove his goods, he merely remarked, "The fire is not *destined* to go beyond the study which it is now consuming." All this serves to mark the character of the man, but it distracted his attention from the proper pursuit of his profession. Varley wrote a "*Treatise on Zodiacal Physiognomy*, besides works really relating to his profession, such as *Observations on Colouring and*

Sketching from Nature in 1830, and *A Practical Treatise on Perspective.*

It has already been said that Varley's art was based on that of Girtin, rather than of Turner, but his study and appreciation of the old masters, Claude and Poussin, enabled him to give a classic air to his landscapes that quite removed them from any imitation of Girtin's style. Turner's pictures consist of multitudinous details properly subordinated to breadth of treatment; but Varley's compositions, on the contrary, have few parts; the details are passed over, and great breadth and simplicity is the result, sometimes it is true with a tendency to vacancy and emptiness, and in his works for the dealers, often verging on a sort of stereotyped conventionalism. Varley's tints are beautifully laid, with a full and free pencil, and stippling is not resorted to, to flatten the masses; but he said that he got very fine qualities and suggestions in his skies by pumping vigorously upon them; yet the washing is not apparent, the tints of clouds being generally very sharply defined, and this is the case also with his foliage, which is massive and large, rather than imitative; he oftentimes resorted to taking out the light in his foliage with bread, but did not use body colour in his best works. He usually painted common sun-light, and summer foliage rather than autumnal tints, seldom treating sunsets, or what are called effects. He was very happy in the introduction of figures to his landscapes, so as to lead the eye to the interesting point, the "look there" of his picture. He loved to have children around him when sketching from nature, and often encouraged their gambols by cakes and scrambles for half-pence. Thus he never

wanted models, and was able to see them at all points of his subject, and to determine where they could most appropriately be introduced into the picture. In his latter years he practised a new mode of execution, which seemed to produce great richness and power, but wanted the freshness and purity of his works in the earlier manner. This new mode consisted in laying down a sheet of whitey-brown over hard white paper, painting the subject richly on the low-toned surface paper, and then rubbing away for the high lights down to the pure white paper; thus he gained great tone, combined with brilliancy, but it was meretricious and a bad exchange for his earlier and simpler manner. His art has influenced his pupils throughout life, and it may justly be said that in their practice lingers most of those great truths that have been acknowledged by all the best artists; and which, if they are ignored for a time for mere imitative art, will have to be revived, and again become dogmas if we are to again have great artists in our school.

William Henry Pyne, another of the foundation members of the Water-Colour Society, is better known by his art-publications than by his paintings. He was the son of a tradesman in Holborn, where young Pyne was born in 1770. He practised various branches of art in water colours, and was by turns a portrait, a landscape, and a figure painter. In 1803, two years before the formation of the society, Pyne published a work which he calls *A Microcosm, or Picturesque Delineation of the Arts, Agriculture, Manufactures, &c., of Great Britain.* It is an oblong folio, containing many hundred groups, and rustic figures, utensils, &c., etched and aqua-tinted—

a kind of store-house for amateur painters to glean aid from in making up their pictures. He was afterwards engaged in producing a *History of the Royal Residences of Windsor Castle, St. James's, Carlton House, Kew Palace, Hampton Court, and Frogmore*, which was illustrated by one hundred coloured engravings, fac-similes of original drawings by himself, Wild, Stephanoff, and others. Pyne was a great lover of society, and associating much with his brother artists, was full of anecdotes of them and their art. His publications and the connection they brought him into with publishers, led him to forsake art for authorship. He was the author of a series of chatty and agreeable papers, which he named *Wine and Walnuts*, and afterwards projected and edited a clever gossiping serial, *The Somerset House Gazette*, to which we have been occasionally indebted, and which deserved a longer existence than it was fated to obtain. It was only continued for two years, when it was merged in the *Literary Chronicle*. Two of Pyne's sons followed the arts. One of them married a daughter of John Varley. Pyne himself died in 1843.

In considering an artist's works, it is always desirable to know what were the causes that led him to adopt art as his profession. Hence, his birth-place and parentage, the influences that surrounded him in his youth, the master who taught him and the intimates and associates who formed his taste, all his local surroundings have an interest. Strange to say, though so short a time has elapsed since many of the founders of our water-colour school have passed from us, the facts of their early life which may now be collected, are, in most cases, very meagre, while all that relates to them is too often entirely

forgotten. Thus it is with *Robert Hills*, the animal painter, of whom we merely know that he was born at Islington on the 26th of June, 1769, and that at school he received some instruction in art from John Greese, noted for his corpulency. This John or Jack Greese, as he was called by his brother artists, was a drawing-master of fashionable repute, who taught, among others, the princesses, daughters of George III., and often had the honour of a gossip with his Majesty. We know nothing of the profit derived from his instruction by young Hills, who must have commenced art early in life, since, in 1791, when only twenty-one years of age, we find him contributing to the exhibition of the Royal Academy, "A Wood Scene with Gipsies," and, in 1792, "A Landscape." No doubt, with other artists, he was dissatisfied with the treatment water-colour art necessarily received then, as after this he ceased to be an exhibitor; and we find his name among the six painters who met at Shelley's rooms to form the Water-Colour Society. He was one of the first members, and for many years their secretary. To their exhibition he was a constant contributor until 1818, when, from some cause, he ceased to contribute until 1823.

Many artists disparage the Academy, and are too ready to complain of the treatment of the works of those who are not members; yet, when other resources fail, they fall back, as of right, to its walls, assured of generous and impartial treatment. So it was with Hills; during these six years he annually sent eight works to the Academy, and, on an average, seven of his works were accepted and placed on the exhibition during the time of his secession from the society. After this period, Hills

returned to his membership, and continued to exhibit with the Water-Colour Society until his death, which took place at No. 17, Golden Square, on the 14th of May, 1844, when he had nearly attained his seventy-fifth year. He was buried at Kensal Green.

To the student, animal-painting presents greater difficulties than landscape or even the human figure. The figure painter can pose his model and instruct him from time to time to take a passing action; but, even when in a posture of repose, it is hardly possible to keep an animal quiet, and all passing actions of walking, running, or leaping can only be treated with truth by those who have studied animal forms intimately, the structure of the joints, and the muscles that give them motion. Even in those animals where the form is obscured by long hair or wool, this knowledge is equally requisite if they are to appear to have life, and not to look like stuffed specimens. Hills was a diligent student of nature and untiring in collecting materials for his art; his studies of animals amount to several hundreds. Many of these he etched with great skill, and between 1798 and 1835 he published etchings of nearly 800 animals and groups of animals in every variety of action and fore-shortening, treated with great delicacy of outline and careful definition of form. The print-room of the British Museum is enriched with a collection of 1240 etchings by Hills presented by the late Mrs. Garle; they are from fine states of the plates, touched on by the artist. A bronze statue of a red deer modelled by Hills in terra cotta in 1817, and afterwards wrought by him in bronze, was to be seen in the great Exhibition of 1862, and is a proof how easily the artist who has obtained a thorough knowledge of his subject

can overcome the difficulty of expressing it in a material foreign to his usual practice.

Hills' handling and mode of execution were totally unlike the felicitous ease of Landseer, or the dashing freedom of Frederick Tayler. His art is patiently elaborated—the labour bestowed evident and undisguised. He never seems to have worked direct from Nature, but from his various studies, these being mostly drawings. Thus that clear, truthful touch that is obtained by working with Nature before us, is wholly wanting, exchanged, indeed, for that hesitating and feeble feeling after form, which even he, with his knowledge and abundant materials, could not overcome. In some of his earlier works the handling is less laboured; in all his latter works the animals—nay, even the backgrounds—have a woolly texture that is very disagreeable. Again, painting from drawings has prevented that attention to the accidents of relief so observable in objects seen out of doors or in sunlight. The animals too often seem inlaid into the ground, the painter having forced the light or dark of the background against the dark or light of the figure, in order to give relief, but with exactly the opposite result. We miss those beautiful warm reflections from the sunny glade to the under side of the animal grazing or gambolling in the sunlight; those subtle interchanges of light and dark, of form lost and found, that may be stored from repeated observations, but are apt to escape us when working apart from Nature. Hills generally gives the characteristic actions of the animals with great truth—particularly of his deer; these he evidently loved to paint more than any other animal. He often worked in conjunction with Barret and with Robson.

The professors of the new art of water-colour painting were mostly landscape painters, but the society was fortunate in numbering among its founders *Joshua Cristall*, a figure and a landscape painter, whose works served to give diversity and contrast to their exhibitions. He was the son of Alexander Cristall, who came from the neighbourhood of Dundee, and was master of a small vessel trading to the ports of the Mediterranean, more especially to Smyrna and Constantinople. His trading relations introduced him to Mr. John Batten, a merchant of Penzance, whose daughter he married, and their son Joshua was born at Cambourne in Cornwall, in 1767.

Mrs. Cristall was well educated, a lady of enthusiastic temperament, full of love for poetry, and for the mythic love of classic antiquity. She devoted herself to the education of her son, and from her he early imbibed that classical taste which throughout life characterized his works. A friend of his father's offered to adopt young Cristall, and to take him into his business, promising to leave the boy all his wealth. But Cristall hated trade, and had early resolved to be an artist. This his father opposed, and denied him the use of paper and pencils in order to overcome his propensity for drawing and painting. But Joshua found means to pursue his favourite studies; with his scanty pocket-money he purchased Spanish liquorice, dissolved it in water, and with this colour covered the white-washed walls of his bed-room with designs and drawings, some of which are said to have been very bold and spirited, and to have indicated his future excellence. The elder Cristall removed to Rotherhithe, and engaged in business as a sail and mast-maker, in which he was assisted and

finally succeeded by a younger brother of the painter. Joshua meanwhile was apprenticed by his father to a china dealer in the Minories, but the business was so hateful to him, that he quitted his apprenticeship before his term was completed. This led also to his being obliged to leave his home and to enter upon a life of great hardship. A friend recommended him to Wedgewood for employment as a china painter, and for a time he worked in the potteries. But the mechanical repetition and reproduction required at that time by the manufacturer, was irksome to Cristall, and afforded no scope for his art or his imagination; he returned to London, living as he well could with secret assistance from his devoted mother. During this time it is related that he seriously injured his health by endeavouring to live solely on potatoes and water, an attempt he persevered in for nearly a year. One of his sisters determined to live with him and share his difficulties. She got work from an engraver, and by various means they endeavoured to live while he studied his art. He obtained his admittance as a student of the Royal Academy, and not only rapidly improved in his profession, but learned from his brother students many little ways of adding to his stinted income.

In the schools of the Royal Academy he must have diligently studied the antique, and entered fully into its spirit. It entirely delivered him from that tendency to littleness and prettiness which is almost inherent in water-colour art, and formed in him the large, square, and simple style which he retained through life, and which gave grandeur even to common forms and rustic figures. At this period he was one of those who frequented the

house of Dr. Munro—the practising academy in which so many of our best water-colour artists were formed. There, no doubt, he followed the manner of the place, copying prints, sketches, and the drawings of his predecessors; and with his companions going forth to the then rural banks of the Thames, above and below the great city, to make studies from Nature of skies, effects, and landscape details. A picture painted by him, "A Shipwreck at Hastings," gained him the notice of the Duke of Argyll, who purchased the work, and afterwards permitted it to be engraved for the benefit of the young artist. For that purpose it was placed in the hands of an engraver, who unfortunately became insolvent, and the picture was seized with his other effects. The poor painter had to pay a large sum to redeem his own property, and the additional mortification to offend his patron, through the delay in obtaining possession of it. But Cristall's diligence and love of his art overcame all obstacles to his progress, and gradually won for him reputation and success. Born in 1767, he had been some years in practice when the growing importance of the art led to a desire among those who practised it to form a separate exhibition of their own works. Together with Glover he was one of the earliest promoters of this scheme, and was one of the six painters who held their first meeting at Shelley's house in George Street, and joined the Water Colour Society at its formation. Though he had studied the figure, and loved figure subjects, he also painted landscapes, marines, and occasionally portraits. To the first exhibition in Brook Street he sent seven pictures: "Lycidas," "The Rival Goddesses," "The Judgment of Paris," together with some Welsh

landscapes, and his annual contributions continued of the same mixed character.

His works were not numerous: between 1805 and 1821 he exhibited 223 pictures, or on an average about thirteen per annum. In 1821 we find him invested with the office of president; this he held until 1831, when he was succeeded by Copley Fielding. Whilst residing at Maida Hill, the painter, about the year 1812, became acquainted with Miss Cozens. She had been left an orphan, and brought up by her aunt, a lady who kept a large school at the Old Manor House, Paddington Green, then a quaint and rural suburb. The aunt sent her niece to France, in exchange for the daughter of a French nobleman, by whose family Miss Cozens was much beloved and treated as a second daughter. At the breaking out of the French Revolution, the château where they resided was attacked by a revolutionary mob, and the family made prisoners, the ladies being sent to Paris, and Miss Cozens with them. After a time she had the good fortune to escape as an American, and, passing through Germany, joined her aunt in England, and eventually succeeded her in the school. This lady Cristall married in 1813; her cultivated mind and lively French manners, together with his talents, made their society much sought after, and their house the resort of the musicians, authors, and artists of the day.

Mrs. Cristall, who thought her husband's works not sufficiently finished, urged upon him greater completion, and also tried to induce him to recommence portraits. Her influence prevailed for a time, but he afterwards returned to his own special subjects and broad manner of treating them. About the year 1821, Cristall's health

failing, his wife proposed a country residence; and by the advice of their friend, Mr. Meyrick of Goodrich Castle, they bought a cottage in that lovely neighbourhood, to which they removed some time in 1822. There the painter passed many happy years, closed at last by the lingering illness of his wife, whose death made Goodrich distasteful to him. He was childless, and in 1840 again returned to London, took up his abode in Robert Street, Hampstead Road, and sought to renew his intimacy with his brother artists and old associates. He had continued the practice of his art, and, with the exception of the year 1832, his annual contributions to the water-colour exhibition. On his return to London he found the art-world astir, and artists of all ages entering vigorously into the competition proposed by the Government for the decoration of the Houses of Parliament. Notwithstanding his advanced age, Cristall prepared to join in the struggle for honours and rewards; but leaving a party at the house of Mr. Rogers, he was knocked down by the carelessness of a cab-driver in crossing one of the crowded streets of his own neighbourhood. Although he recovered from the accident it incapacitated him from labouring on a large cartoon, and he abandoned the competition. He removed to Circus Road, St. John's Wood, where he died, 18th of October, 1847. One of his Herefordshire friends, who happened to be in London, watched by his bedside the last three days and nights of his illness; and at his own request, Cristall was buried near his wife at Goodrich. What little property he had was left to two very faithful servants, who had lived many years with him and his wife.

We have already said that Cristall was a good draftsman, and that his style served to give dignity to the art of water-colour painting. His Welsh knitters and spinners, Scotch shepherdesses and rustic figures, have an air of grandeur without being deprived of their individuality or losing their rusticity. The bare-footed, bare-legged girls of South Wales—a finer race than those of the North—whose active out-of-door habits give them ease of motion and pliancy of frame, served him as models, and his pencil invested them with somewhat of classic grandeur.

If we cannot wholly free him from the charge of mannerism, it was of a nature to give his work a separate and distinct character. His art was large and simple, and entirely free from prettiness and insipidity. In his execution he made but little use of the new processes by which finesse of execution is sought and obtained; his brush was free, and he laid his tints flat and clear, not resorting much to stippling or washing; taking out his lights broadly, but carefully avoiding the use of body colours. Thus his pictures are wholly transparent, like those of all the best painters of his day. The practice is now altogether changed; stippling both with transparent and body colours, the opposition of tints by hatching, and the mixture of solid colours even in the flat washes, as is now the practice, produces beautiful results of their kind, but is as an art, wholly distinct from that of the early masters of the school. Cristall sometimes worked in conjunction with other artists, putting in the groups to Robson's Scotch subjects, and adding classical figures to Barret's landscapes. Although many of his pictures consisted of a single figure engaged in some

rustic occupation, he occasionally painted large compositions. He was, when resident in London, a member of the Sketching Society, of which mention has been made. Much liked by his companions, and of a cheerful and even disposition, he continued his labours until a good old age, happy in the practice of his profession, and leaving works behind him distinctive in their style, which ought to ensure him a place among the worthies of our water-colour school.

John Glover, whose art forms a link between the early practice of water-colour painting, and that which obtains in our day, was the son of poor parents. He was born at Houghton-on-the-Hill in Leicestershire, on the 18th February, 1767. Brought up in a small village in the midland counties, there seemed little to lead him to the pursuit of art. He received a plain education, suitable to his station, of which art-teaching formed no part. Yet we are told that, as a very child, drawing was his delight, and that every scrap of paper he could obtain was filled with his designs. He seemed to have made good use of his school teaching, nevertheless, for in 1786 he was elected master of the free school at Appleby, and in his leisure hours not only studied art, but cultivated music with some success. His mind, however, ran too much upon art for him to be contented with general teaching, and about 1794 he removed to Lichfield, and gave up all his time to art, and to art-instruction. Up to this period he had painted only in water colours, but now he began to work in oil, in which he afterwards met with great success. We are told also that he produced some etched plates; but these have not come under our notice. Glover's practice in

water colours was founded on that of William Payne of Plymouth. Many of his early works are laid in with Payne's grey, and the colour tinted over this preparation. Like Payne, he was tricky in his execution; his foliage was wrought by splitting the hairs of his brush, which gives a clever lightness and facility of handling, and a sense of ease in execution, but is apt to result in a great sameness throughout the foliage. This manner he continued to practise after the art had advanced to newer methods in the hands of other painters. Like Payne, he delighted in startling accidental effects, and was very clever in introducing into his pictures sun-rays bursting through clouds or through foliage.

His style seems to have pleased the public, who are soon attracted by any peculiarity or novelty. His works became widely known, and his reputation as an artist was established. So much so, that at the foundation of the Society of Painters in Water Colours, of which he was one of the promoters, he sent nineteen pictures to the first exhibition in 1805. He continued to exhibit works in water colours up to 1813, contributing during the above period a sum of 182 works. In 1815, we find him president of the society for that year, an office to which he was not re-elected in 1816. It is said that Glover's increased practice in oil, and his preference for that branch of his art, led him to exert his influence on the society to open their exhibition to oil paintings as well as water-colour, a change which we have seen was effected, and continued the practice of the society until and during the exhibition of 1820. But Glover's ambition soared beyond what the society had now become. He was desirous of being elected into the

Royal Academy, and in 1818 withdrew himself from the Water-Colour Society to place his name on the list of candidates for the Academy associateship, but was not successful.

On the restoration of the Bourbon family he visited Paris, extending his journey to Switzerland and Italy, and gathering studies for future subjects. He now almost wholly abandoned water-colour painting, and spread large canvases for pictures in oil, for which he was enabled to obtain what at that time was thought very large prices. For his "Durham Cathedral," which is now in Lambton Castle, and was lent by the Earl of Durham for exhibition in 1862, he had 500 guineas, and by his works and his teaching he was rapidly realizing a competence. His terms as teacher are said to have been very exorbitant. The world, as usual, thought his peculiar manner was a secret, that, once obtained, the possessor could exercise with equal effect. It was Glover's practice to spend the entire day with his pupil, executing a small work in his presence, which was left for a time for the student to repeat, but was afterwards a further source of profit to the painter.

In 1820, Glover opened an exhibition of his pictures both in oil and water colours in Old Bond Street, and for several years continued the practice of the profession, hoping to realize a sufficient sum to enable him to retire to Ulswater, a favourite neighbourhood where he had already purchased a plot of land and a house. This plan, however, was never carried out; for some cause insufficiently known, he formed a determination to emigrate to Australia, and fixed upon the new settlement of Swan River.

Before he left Europe he paid a visit to Louis Philippe at Eu; he had been acquainted with the King of the French in his early banishment and residence at Twickenham. He took with him some of his large works, hoping the king would be a purchaser, but we do not understand that his expectations were realized. He arrived in Tasmania in March, 1831, and set up his easel amid scenery wholly different from that he had left; some few of his works were purchased in the colony and others sent to England, where it was expected that the novelty of the scenery would prove a charm; but topography is widely separated from art: it is not the scenery, but the mode of realizing it to the spectator, the mode of presenting it with all the force of the artist's mind, that makes the picture a work of art. Glover's *manner* had become somewhat stale before he left England, and no adaptation of worked-up effects to new scenes, could revive its interest. His works excited no attention, and found no purchasers in England. For several of the latter years of his life he painted but little, passing his time in peace and tranquillity among his children and grandchildren. He died on the 9th December, 1849, aged eighty-two years, leaving behind him a wife six years his senior.

However the repetition of his mannered execution may have tired his contemporaries, it certainly was very effective in his hands, giving great sharpness united with delicacy—good atmospheric effect and great aërial perspective. His oil paintings, wherein he aimed at delicate softness united with the same atmospheric truth, are less satisfactory than his works in water colours, and have become somewhat smooth and painty by age. The

impression he made in his day was more that of successful novelty than of art, and art was but little advanced by him.

William Havell has well sustained the reputation to which his knowledge of art and his early works justly entitle him. He was the third son in a family of eight boys and six girls, and was born at Reading on the 9th February, 1782. His father was a drawing-master, but the pressure of a large family made it necessary to seek some addition to his small professional earnings, and he engaged in a retail business in the town. William Havell was sent early in life to the grammar-school at Reading, of which Dr. Valpy was then the head master. His father was the drawing-master at the school. His son continued there several years, and gained a good classical education which fitted him for a better position than his birth and family prospects promised him.

Dwelling in a country town with many sons to provide for and little means of placing them out in life, his father—when young Havell left school—wished him to follow his business rather than to adopt his art. He had felt, as who engaged in teaching has not, the incessant toil, the exposure to all weathers, the uncertainty of engagements, and the small remuneration of a country teacher, and he thought the certainty of trade afforded a better prospect; but the youth thought otherwise, and sought every opportunity secretly to improve himself in drawing. Being surprised by his father, on one occasion while finishing a sketch, the latter was so much struck with the artistic feeling it displayed that he saw it would be no longer right to oppose his son's decided inclination. Henceforth he was permitted to study openly. He

received every help from his parent, and was aided to make a journey to Wales in pursuit of his art. He returned with a large number of sketches, and deep and vivid impressions of the marvellous effects of cloud and air in mountain scenery. We first trace young Havell as exhibitor in the catalogues of the Royal Academy in 1804 and 1805. In the former year his contribution was "Caernarvon Castle," in the latter, "Nant Francon Valley," also in Caernarvonshire, and both no doubt the fruits of his Welsh journey. In 1806 he was again an exhibitor of "Winchester Tower, Windsor," and another work; but he had meanwhile joined the new movement, and become a member of the Society of Painters in Water Colours. In 1805 he exhibited twelve works, mostly views in Wales; and continued to exhibit about the same average number until 1813.

His sister Lucy, in a short biography of her brother, tells us that in 1807 Havell went to Westmoreland, and that in order to study the scenery thoroughly, he took a cottage at Ambleside, and remained more than twelve months. In this time he painted many of his finest water-colour works. She says that "from this date until he left for China in 1816, he was in the height of his prosperity." Meanwhile he had resided occasionally with a married sister at Hastings, and in 1810–11 came to Reading to assist his father, whose declining health prevented him continuing his professional teaching in that neighbourhood. After his father's death he returned to London, leaving the teaching in Reading to his brother Edward, whose son, also an art-teacher, still resides in that town.

When changes took place in the Water-Colour Society in 1813, Havell seceded from it, although he

annually sent one or two pictures for exhibition until he left England. When the embassy to China, under Lord Amherst, was determined on, Havell was appointed to accompany it as an artist, and sailed in the *Alceste* on the 9th July, 1816. His journal, full of descriptions of character and scenery, is still in the possession of his sister. Unfortunately, Havell did not agree with the officers with whom he messed, and having gravely offended one of them and refused him the satisfaction demanded, his position was rendered exceedingly unpleasant, and Sir Murray Maxwell being detached with his ship to India, Havell was glad to accept his offer of a passage there, and left the embassy at Macao. He spent a fortnight at Manilla and landed at Penang, the scenery of which struck him from its extreme richness. Here he was invited to remain, and would have had full employment for his talents, but fearing to lose the good introductions he had obtained for Calcutta, he determined to proceed, and reached that presidency on the 4th April, 1817. In a letter written shortly after, he appears to have been highly satisfied with his prospects; he was in full employment, chiefly painting small portraits in water colours, and hoping to realize a purse for his return. He remained in India until 1825, but soon found that if there was ample employment the terms were inadequate to pay the expenses of travelling from place to place, and to maintain an establishment suitable to his position and the costly style of living. An attack of fever following cholera determined him to return to his native country. Though without the fortune he had expected in the sanguine days of his arrival, he had realized a small sum as a provision for the future.

In 1827, he re-entered the Water-Colour Society, and the same year visited Florence, Rome, and Naples. For two years he continued to exhibit works in water colour, but he had begun to devote himself to oil, and after 1828 his pictures are no longer in the society's catalogue; and in 1830 his name disappears from the list of members, to re-appear in the list of exhibitors of the Royal Academy as a contributor of works in oil, mostly from Italian sources. He continued to exhibit there until 1857, the year of his death.

Havell's long absence in the East, followed by his visit to Italy on his return, had dissevered him from his early friends, and left him behind in the race of art. Since the establishment of public exhibitions, the artist's life has become one of continuous competition; from year to year, he has to struggle to maintain his position—to hold his own against ever-rising competitors, and to advance on his previous efforts, if he would not be thought to fall back. While Havell was abroad he more than stood still, he retrograded; on his return, he was forgotten and out of mind. His early reputation had been connected with a novel art and a rising school, in which his works ranked with the best; on his return he found this art greatly advanced, very varied in its choice of subjects, and its professors in high public estimation. He felt he did not continue to rank with them; this caused him to abandon water colour and to paint in oil, but in this new field he had to win a place, to contend with the strong men who then held the field, and it was beyond his powers: his works in oil were never equal to those he had wrought in water colours.

In 1840, Havell removed from Frederick Street,

Hampstead Road, to 16, Bayswater Terrace, where his sister Jane kept house for him until her death in 1853. The interest of the money he had saved in India, together with his very limited professional earnings, did not suffice for the expenses of his then very simple household. He was obliged to trench upon his capital, which the failure of one of the Indian banks further reduced. His sister's death was a sad shock to him. He had lost most of his early friends by death and absence, and his future prospects were far from encouraging. To add to his troubles, his house was robbed, and among other valuables a number of his drawings and unsold works were stolen from the walls. On this occasion the aid of the police was sought, and a knowing detective, who, however, had not added connoisseurship to his other attainments, supplied with one of Havell's drawings as an example, was sent round to pawnbrokers and dealers in search of the lost works. Entering a shop of this kind in Wardour Street, he asked, "Have you purchased any pictures like this lately?" The dealer, struck by the work exhibited, exclaimed at once, "Ah, a fine Havell! a very fine Havell!" The detective, whose suspicions were aroused by the recognition, replied, "Ah, yes, a Havell true enough; but how the devil came you to know that it is a Havell?" Eventually the drawings were discovered at a pawnbroker's at Paddington, and the artist was more hurt by the fact that only two or three shillings had been obtained upon his best works, than he had been by their loss, notwithstanding its importance to him.

Soon after, he gave up his house at Bayswater to remove to High Row, Kensington, to be near one or two

old friends who still remained, and in whose homes he was always a cordial guest. His health declined, and having gone to his native place for a change of air too late in the season, he returned in a weakened state, and gradually became worse. On his death-bed he made a gift of what little remained of his property, to two of his remaining sisters, and died 16th of December, 1857. He was buried at Kensal Green, where a simple stone has been erected to his memory.

It is for his early connection with water-colour art that we have introduced in our work a memoir of Havell. He aided to lift the art out of the littleness of the topographic school." His early manner was large and massive, suppressing unimportant details, and treating the picture for its general effect. Of this period there is a fine specimen at South Kensington. No. 382, "Windsor Castle," (circa 1807-8). Latterly, he completed his pictures more, attempting the effects of air and sunshine; of such works there is also a satisfactory specimen at South Kensington, in No. 566, "View of Hastings," dated 1815. His oil pictures have much excellence, for though rather yellow in hue, and somewhat monotonous, the effect of sunshine is admirably given; the picture is usually well composed and arranged, while these works are at least marked by a distinct and characteristic style.

These artists of whom we have spoken were the true founders of the society. By their works its reputation was gained, and its influence established. Yet there is one more who has not received notice in our work, and whose name is necessary to the completeness of this chapter.

Francis Nicholson was born at Pickering in Yorkshire,

on 14th November, 1753, of a family well known as the possessors of a small property in that neighbourhood. After two visits to London, he settled at Whitby, where he continued nearly ten years. He then resided a time at Knaresborough, and afterwards at Ripon, and afterwards came to London and established himself as an artist. We find no information as to how or when he commenced art, and can only trace that he first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1789, "A View of Castle Howard."

His practice was in water-colours, and he must have made good progress in 1804, to have then been accepted as one of the members of the Water-Colour Society. But his art, though highly respectable, and evincing much power, never attained excellence. He invented a mode of treating the lights in water-colour painting, from which he hoped great results; but executive processes must always hold an inferior place; they may be useful to genius, but can do little to aid mediocrity. His principle consisted in painting the lights with a solid composition not liable to be displaced by water; over this the water-colour tints were laid, and the preparation being finally removed by means of highly rectified spirits of turpentine and spirits of wine, left the lights as clear and sharply defined as if laid on in solid pigments after the local colour. A full account of the process will be found in the *Somerset House Gazette*, vol. i. p. 40. Pyne says that the example of his works in the Water-Colour Exhibition, though his process was not followed by his brother members, tended to stimulate them to the increased richness, force, and power which they shortly afterwards achieved. The process itself fell into desue-

tude. He published *The Practice of Drawing and Painting Landscapes from Nature.* He devoted much time to the advancement of lithography, giving up the practice of his own art, and having acquired a competency, only worked for his pleasure, amusing himself with experiments in painting, and the use of different vehicles, and at the advanced age of ninety-one years, died in Charlotte Street, Portland Place, on the 4th March 1844.

CHAPTER XVIII.

STATE OF BRITISH ART AT THE END OF THE CENTURY.

Review of the Progress of the British School—Opinions which prevailed—No Faith in our own Artists—Either as Painters or Teachers—Assumptions of Dilettanti — Effect of Hogarth's Works — And of Reynolds's original Treatment of Portraiture—Barry's great Historic Examples—West and Copley—Influence of the Royal Academy—And of the Water-Colour School—Want of public Appreciation and Sympathy—Hostility of Critics—Their gross Personalities.

As our record of British Art draws towards the conclusion of the century, and brings us half way onward in the task we have undertaken, we find a resting-place from whence to review the advance already made and the hopeful prospects of the future. When Hogarth, in his witty frontispiece to the catalogue of the Incorporated Society of Artists, represented the art of the old masters of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, by three withered and leafless exotics which the monkey connoisseur is hopelessly endeavouring to acclimatize and revive by his watering-pot, he set forth a fuller truth than perhaps even he was aware of. His aim was rather to satirize the ignorance that upheld wretched copies and second-rate works because they were trumpeted forth with great names, than to tell us that art, in those countries where it had once flourished, was now dead, and that all hope for the future must rest upon vigorous shoots from a native root.

With our countrymen of the higher classes, foreign travel formed the essential finish of a polite education; they were taught to look up to the great works of the foreigners of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as hopelessly beyond the reach of any native artist, and they still continued to believe in the superiority of foreigners from the tradition of former greatness, when art had died out in its native seats and nothing remained but a lifeless effigy on its grave. It was this that in the early days of English art, Hogarth, Wilson, and Reynolds had to struggle against; it may be traced in the advice given by Lord Mount Edgcumbe to Reynolds when he was starting for Italy—that he should place himself under the inanely respectable Pompeo Battoni; it was this that made a great authority of Mengs, and led the Duke of Northumberland, when the above three great English painters were in their zenith, to cover his walls with the works of these two insipid Italians, to the total exclusion of those of his own countrymen. We trace it again in the story told by Northcote of the wonderful success of West's "Pylades and Orestes," which is said to have brought him no commissions. The reason of this was honestly expressed by the gentleman who, telling his son of the great popularity of the picture and the delight he had felt in seeing it, met the natural question, "Why, then, did you not purchase it?" with the reply, "What could I do with it if I had it? You surely would not have me hang up a modern English picture in my house, unless it were a portrait?"

A foreigner in England, as we have shown in the case of Zuccarelli, could still command prices and find purchasers, when native talent and genius were over-

looked and neglected. Artists were even thought incompetent to manage their own affairs and to direct their own schools without the advice and assistance of connoisseurs and patrons, an idea which still lingers in the world. Thus when in 1755 our native artists had somewhat taken the public by surprise by the exhibition of their pictures at the Foundling Hospital, and sought to unite themselves into a body to found an annual exhibition of their works, and to provide for the instruction of the rising artists of the country, the Dilettante Society, then of about twenty years standing, offered their aid and co-operation; and these gentlemen, whose sole acquaintance with art was intellectual, and whose designation has since become a by-word for pretentious trifling, had the modesty to put forth the following as their conditions for participating in the scheme:—First, "That the President of the Academy be always chosen from the Dilettante Society." Secondly, "That *all* the Society of Dilettanti be members of the Academy," graciously adding, "the twelve seniors present at any meeting only to have votes," but then the artists are to be equally limited, for though the third resolution is, "That any artist *may* be chosen a member of the Academy, only twelve, to be chosen annually, are to have votes." Here was the "lay element" with a vengeance! What wonder that with such men as Hogarth, Wilson, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Scott, and Sandby, the scheme found little favour; it is only quoted here to show how contemptuously these travelled Dilettanti must have looked upon the art and artists of their day, how little they were aware of the talent rising around them, or that a revolution was at hand that was to displace the "black masters"

from their pre-eminence and to replace them in public favour by the works of those men who were then of such little reputation. Yet English art had burst into its glorious spring with an excellence that astonishes us when we look back to it, and might well have taken by surprise an age in which the works of the earlier masters of Italy were almost unheeded, and the cold frigidities of the last of the Romans or Florentines, or the academic tameness of the eclectic school of Bologna, were the delight of the travelled cognoscenti who set themselves up as the arbiters of taste.

Upon this state of art patronage Hogarth broke in, an erratic genius whom the men of taste did not at all understand—who could be judged by none of their rules. He had none of the refinements of execution of the Dutch school, whose art they loved for its finish and completion. He had none of the meretricious sensualism of the later French school, nor of the generalized commonplace, the worn-out subjects of the expiring schools of Italy. According to their views he was not a painter, not a draughtsman; how should they class him? Walpole, who had some taste, and would at times think for himself, is fain to praise him, but not as a painter; he treats Hogarth as a clever dramatic story-teller on canvas, "considering him rather as a writer of comedy with his pencil, than as a painter;" and after ten pages of lively description of the merits of the dramatic incidents in his pictures, he continues: "But, perhaps, too much has been said of this great genius as an *author*—it is time to speak of him as a painter. As a painter he had but slender merit." What wonder, in this state of taste, that

Hogarth, our first native subject painter, found no purchasers for his pictures; was obliged to part with them to the one bidder at an auction, where but one attended; or to present them to hospitals, and make his living by the sale of the engravings he made from them; which, at least, showed the popularity of his honest and novel art with the masses, if it was voted low and vulgar by those who could go into raptures over a Furini or Carlo Maratti. Nevertheless, the first step was taken in a new branch of art, the foundation stone laid on which future Morlands, Wilkies, Mulreadys and Leslies were to build, with a variety and beauty that we have yet to describe.

This new life infused into British art soon spread to our portrait painters: Reynolds also had broken away from the dreary repetitions, the stale poses of Kneller and Dahl, and dared to paint his sitters as he found them—beautiful women, gleesome children, soldiers, sailors, civilians, in the actions and with the expression of their daily life and occupation. Thus, some of his loveliest works are due to the chance attitudes of his sitters, which he had the genius to perceive, the taste to adopt, and the courage to paint. This is the "momentary quality" that Northcote attributes to Reynolds, which enabled him to produce a series of portraits fresh and novel in the extreme. We have said *chance* attitudes, but should rather have said characteristic, for does not the body in its every action, in its repose, in its very idleness, respond to the mind—and in seizing these momentary and passing attitudes, which the painters who preceded him would have tamed down into stereotyped postures, Sir Joshua was but

giving the varied individuality of natural character. In truth, this constitutes the intense charm of his works, a charm even greater than the accidents of shadow, of light and dark, of colour, or of a quaint costume; and this character he seized so readily, adapted so happily, and, with such unvarying taste, moulded into new and unusual beauties. He thought for himself, and thinking for himself, led the way for his countrymen in other branches of art to think for themselves also. Contemporary with Sir Joshua, Gainsborough had made a great stride. In portraiture, if less varied, he was almost equally original with the President; equally sensitive to grace and beauty, yet far less anxious about executive processes or new methods of painting; contented with a simple manner of his own which charms us by its felicitous facility, its purity, and the daylight of its silvery tones, his portraits have come down to us almost as fresh as they left his easel. Nor should we overlook Romney, as a portrait painter of a poetical temperament, who treated his subjects with a breadth and simplicity widely different from the commonplace repetitions of the men who preceded the revival.

The first advance of our historical painters was, as we have seen, one of promise. In this branch the English school had to contend with the noblest art of the greatest artists of the past, with the efforts of the schools of Italy, Flanders, and Spain; efforts devoted to the highest themes, painters patronized by cities, by princes, and, above all, by that richest and most persistent of patrons, the Church. The history painters of the English school had not only to submit to this high standard of comparison, but were compelled to see the false and feeble

art of the Italian decadence held up as far above their hope of rivalry; to see also their own efforts treated with supreme contempt by critics and connoisseurs trained to admire Italian art, not in its fresh and vigorous youth and growth, but in its academic eclecticism and decay.

At such a period there was a true grandeur of resolve when Barry, in his poverty, stretched his large canvases and prepared for years of unpaid labour, undertaking a series of works, which, whatever their shortcomings, are great in their object, and painted to realize his own idea of what should be the artist's aim; the painter, meanwhile, indifferent to patronage, to public opinion, and to present fame. Are we, seeing the neglect he suffered, to wonder at his occasional fretfulness, at his girds and flings at well-paid portrait painting, at his despondency, when, having hoped to find response at last, enduring to the end, he found little recognition of his toil and his success. For he *was* successful in setting a noble example of simplicity of style, unity of thought, and fixity of purpose to the infant school. Besides Barry, Reynolds had contributed to historic art pictures treated, it is true, rather as a colourist than with the severity and simplicity of history, and Romney poetic works, broadly and simply painted, and with much of the true feeling of the grand style; Opie, also, his rude but manly renderings of history and the drama, while Fuseli had revealed to the eye the weird dreams of our two greatest poets, in pictures which, if sometimes extravagant, are always full of fervid poetry and often more than verging on true sublimity.

Of the same school, but wholly diverse, was the

art of Copley and of West. Copley, under the limitations of literal costumes and exact truth, to which he must needs submit, had produced pictures of contemporary history, characteristic of the incidents represented, simply and earnestly painted, and with great propriety of treatment, at the same time so fresh and natural that they carry with them an air of truth, and make us spectators of the scene for ourselves, while we are happily unconscious of bygone art or of learned treatments by earlier painters. Even West, now too much depreciated and what he has done for art disregarded, had set the fashion for scriptural subjects, while we are indebted to him for contending with Reynolds against false costume, and the mistaken notion of treating the battles and incidents of that day in the armour of the Roman, or the nakedness of the heroic age. For this—for delivering historic art from a false theory, and placing it on the firm basis of truth—he deserves the gratitude of his successors in our school.

In landscape painting, Gainsborough had quite repudiated the art of the old masters and become the first founder of the school of rustic English landscape; the first to take nature as it lay around him on every side, and represent it on his canvas with unrivalled truth and ease. With him and Wilson English landscape painting had started into life and already attained an excellence that the multitude of their followers have hardly surpassed. A new art had also arisen—the truly national art of painting in water-colours; already the men who were to win for their works a European reputation, had passed from the rank of students and were shortly to astonish their countrymen by the beauty of

their landscapes. In miniature painting, too, the art which had declined into weakness and puerility, when Kneller and his followers spread their canvases for the world of fashion, had been re-born with the new life of English portraiture, and Cosway, Ozias Humphrey, and Shelley were producing miniatures wherein the art and taste equalled the execution, and each was worthy of the best times of this delightful art.

English art had existed heretofore, as it were, by sufferance, and had been regarded by the titled and the wealthy as little better than house-painting, its professors a better sort of journeymen—a rank which, it must be acknowledged, they had done their best to maintain, leading a rollicking life at clubs and taverns. But art and artists had gained a great step in advance by the foundation of the Royal Academy; it gave them a bond of union, it raised the lowest of the body by the social position of the highest, and gave a status to artists not yet of the body by raising the social position of the whole profession. Moreover, it had opened a new source of wealth to the artist in an exhibition for the sale of his works, schools for the instruction of those who were to be his successors, and had set an example which was to be followed shortly by the foundation of the Water-Colour Society, and, eventually, by other combinations of artists in London and in many of the chief towns of the kingdom.

We have already seen that British art owed little of its progress to patronage, little to learned connoisseurs; it remains to be seen whether the young and struggling school was cheered on by the praises of literary men and critics, by those who represented "the press" of the

last century. Unlike literature, art addresses the eye and speaks in a language more or less common to all; thus all think themselves entitled to judge of it, all unsparingly criticise. The unlearned multitude look upon art as merely imitative, and judge it accordingly; while the literate are too apt to attempt to be learnedly critical, without the technical knowledge or the taste to be so. Yet there are few whose discrimination, honestly exercised, would not enable them to give some just opinions on the subject, or lead them to some true remarks. The story of a picture, whether the painter's own or illustrative of history or poetry, or perhaps of a mere incident or thought only, should be legible to any intelligent or instructed person. Apart from the technical merits of the work, how far its story has been well told or illustrated, and the character and expression well rendered, would be points of general criticism; so would the costume and accessories, which should be strictly in keeping. If horses, dogs, or other animals are prominent, those acquainted with their forms and habits would be competent to criticise their correctness of action; so also in marine subjects and in landscapes. Indeed the eye and mind of intelligence would find many points of just criticism on the knowledge shown in the representation of all natural objects, and remarks of this kind would always have real value to the true artist. When, however, we approach the merits of a picture as a work of art, and talk of breadth, keeping, arrangement of colour, of light and dark, of composition, it requires not only an education in art, but also an innate taste that is rarely developed without much cultivation added to much practice. It is true that some tastes

are so imperceptibly formed that they may be called gifts, so little has any real study had to do with their formation; but these are rare exceptions. It is also true that without much actual practice a *knowledge* of art may be obtained. Such knowledge, assiduously cultivated, forms the connoisseur, who, though acquainted with the technicalities of the various schools, may yet be without any true love for art. Love added constitutes the amateur; and in the union of both, with skill in the practice of art, we have the distinguished artist.

But to return to our subject—the support which the British school in its early days received from the critics. These have rarely been artists, or if so, artists whose professional skill did not enable them to live by art, and whose knowledge was on a par with their art power; such writers showed little appreciation of the pictures they criticised, and resorted to smart witticisms or to low personalities to make up for their deficient powers.

In the times of the foreigners our critics were often those who repaid the skill of the portrait painter by a poem or an epigram, and had no other resource than to bedaub him with an unctuous coat of flattery. Thus Pope, who elsewhere has so well defined the art of criticism, says of the then fashionable portrait painter:—

> "Kneller, by Heav'n and not a master taught,
> Whose art was Nature, and whose pictures thought.
> * * * * *
> Living, great Nature feared he might outvie
> Her works, and dying, fears herself may die."

A pretty conceit, no doubt, but a strange criticism on one whose works had but little affinity to nature. Yet

Pope dabbled in painting a little, and prided himself upon his attempts, and was willing to repay at the expense of a little flattery the assistance he had received from the painter, and knew his man too well not to lay the tints on thick while he was about it. Poetry and painting did not, however, continue long on these sisterly terms. When our artists succeeded in establishing annual exhibitions of their works—when a large public paid to visit them, and pictures became a part of the amusement and gossip of the day, they challenged opinion and criticism, and the critics soon began to exercise their craft as a trade to live by. The renowned Peter Pindar (Dr. Wolcot), himself a dabbler in art, was one of the first writers upon the exhibitions of the Royal Academy. *His Lyric Odes to the Academicians for* 1782 were probably not the less caustic that this body owed its origin to George III., and was under his Majesty's special protection. These odes are not very critical, but are said —we wonder at it!—to have met with a very flattering reception and to have considerably enhanced the Doctor's reputation. His doggerel, like the writings of several followers on the same subject, aims to be smart rather than just, and is strongly personal. He recognizes in his lyric the master-hand of Reynolds, and after an opinion upon his works on the Exhibition walls, which is confined to the wish that the flowing manes of the horses in a portrait were more like hair, and the horses themselves less wooden, he apostrophizes the painter himself:—

"Yet, Reynolds, let me fairly say—
With pride I pour the lyric lay—
To ev'ry thing by thy great hand exprest,
Compar'd, alas! to other men,
Thou art an eagle to a wren!
Now, Mrs. Muse, attend to Mr. West."

And for West he has but very faint praise indeed. This is the first of six verses in the same strain—

"O West, what hath thy pencil done?
Why painted God Almighty's son
Like an old clothes-man about London street!
Place in his hand a rusty bag
To hold each sweet collected rag,
We then shall see the character complete."

Gainsborough is the wit's next victim; yet he winds up an ode to him with an equivocal compliment, and then turns to Chamberlaine, the portrait painter, De Loutherbourg and Wilson; of the latter, whom he coarsely addresses, he prophesies, and his prophecy confirms the opinion that he was capable of better criticism if it had suited his purpose—

". . . . Old red-nosed Wilson's art
Will hold its empire o'er my heart,
By Britain left in poverty to pine;
But, honest Wilson, never mind,
Immortal praises thou shalt find,
And for a dinner have no cause to fear.
Thou start'st at my prophetic rhymes—
Don't be impatient for those times;
Wait till thou hast been dead an hundred years."

The next ode is addressed to Cosway exclusively, and of vulgar abuse, with no redeeming expressions, is a painful example. His wife, of whom we have spoken, was a painter and exhibited at the Academy, which may account for the attack upon her. We quote one verse as a sample.

"Fie, Cosway! I'm ashamed to say
Thou own'st the title of R.A.
I fear to damn thee—'twas the devil's sending—
Some honest calling quickly find,
And bid thy wife her kitchen mind,
Or shirts or shifts be making or be mending."

Cosway thus summarily sent to the devil was a not unworthy follower of our great English miniaturists, and

has left behind him portraits which for taste, sweetness, and elegance, rank, as far as such small works can, with those of Gainsborough and Reynolds. Yet Wolcot finishes his doggerel with saying—

> "Could Raphael's angry ghost arise,
> And on thy figures cast his eyes,
> He'd catch a pistol up and blow your brains out."

The Doctor has the grace to be more complimentary, but not in very modest terms, towards Angelica Kauffmann, whose coquetry with the painters, flirtations, and unhappy marriage are well known—but we need not quote further. The above are fair specimens of the odes, which refer to nine others of the exhibitors, with no variation in style. To one he says, "Suppress thy trash another year;" of the works of another, "I've seen enough, most vile, most execrable stuff." His success tempted him to publish in the following year, *More Lyric Odes to the Royal Academicians*. They were in the same vicious style, but more diffuse, and in 1785, he published his *Farewell Odes*, taking leave of the gentlemen of the Academy, who were surely well rid of him.

Our readers will no doubt be surprised that such wretched senseless personalities could find readers; but satire of the coarsest, and scandal, were more to the taste of that day than is the case at present, and the Academicians were too good game to be left alone. Another writer of the same class began to criticise, if such a term may be used for abuse and malevolence. Antony Pasquin (John Williams), like Peter Pindar, did not attack the works of the painters, but the painters themselves, in his *The Royal Academicians, a Farce*,

1786. On the title-page of this brochure is an etching of a great goose, with a crown on its head, and a large "diploma" suspended from its neck. This supremely witty representation of a Royal Academician has two large arrows, which a satyr has just discharged from his bow, sticking in its bare plucked rump, and exclaims piteously, "Oh dear!" The scene of the farce is laid in the Academy; the *dramatis personæ* consist of Britannia, Truth and Folly, with the members of the Academy, under ill-concealed names. We give a few extracts, but much of the wit is really too gross and disgusting to reprint at the present day. Truth introduces Dominic Neverserious (D. Serres), and after some brief relation says—"You will find him a very honest man, but he has some capital failings which have injured his reputation very considerably in the eyes of the ladies. He washes his face but once a week, changes his linen but once a fortnight, and shaves his visage every new moon." Dominic enters with a continuous volley of oaths mixed up with broken English—perhaps characteristic of the man—but as it contains neither wit nor amusement, far less criticism, and would be beneath the lowest scribbler for the penny press in the present day, we omit it. Truth then introduces Richard Cosway, who was notoriously a conceited man, and served as a laughing-stock at times among his brethren of the brush at their clubs and merry-makings; but Truth is far more naked in her character of him. "This," says she, "is Tiny Cosmetic, Esq., a miniature painter of merit, but where he possesses an ounce of capability, it is sicklied over with a pound of vanity; he looks upon himself as one of the greatest men of the age, and will admit of

no competitor but the King of Prussia; he is as mischievous as a monkey, and as illiterate as a Savoyard; and, though a contemptible animal in his person, he firmly believes that the first beauties of the nation are sighing for his favours," adding further what is quite unreadable. Such insinuations must have been a real injury to the portrait painter in his professional practice, and have not the slightest connection with true criticism.

Not content with this abuse of the man, Truth then turns to his wife and tells us that Cosmetic has "married the daughter of a drunken staymaker of Florence, and has absolutely turned his wife's brain by calling her the queen of taste and the empress of sublimity." Truth continues to abuse Maria, the wife, as much as she had done her husband, and then incites Cosmetic like Candaules, to expose his wife to his friends, and to relate anecdotes of her admirers, that are far too gross for any publications but those of Holywell Street. William Peters, R.A., is then introduced, his name being obscenely paraphrased, and a poor joke added as to his double profession of painter and parson. With him enters "Jemmy o'Blarney" (Barry), "a rough-hewn son of Hibernia, who had so little regard for the sprigs of morality, that he was flogged out of his native parish of Ballyporeen, situate in the sweet county of Cork, in the land of saints, for refusing to take off his hat to the bishop of the diocese." Such is the subtle wit, the keen and appreciative criticism of art and artists, by Antony Pasquin; such the help and countenance the struggling school received at his hands. These two writers had evidently been so successful, that we have a third publication in *The Earwig*, "An Old

Woman's Remarks on the Exhibition of 1781." The old woman's criticisms are of a dogmatic and terse character. In No. 66, "A Mother and Dead Child," we have the pithy remark, "Shocking, indeed;" whether subject or painting, we do not learn. Proceeding to 77, the criticism is still more pointed: "D——d bad" is all that is vouchsafed.

These publications had however awakened a desire on the part of the public to hear something of the Royal Academy and its exhibitions, even if it reached no further than smart personal ridicule of the artists, and witticism, rather than criticism, on their works. In 1784, the *Morning Post* commenced notices of pictures, "at the request of many of our readers—" notices much in the manner of the *Earwig*—slang and ribaldry instead of wit, bad puns and coarse condemnation, making us aware that Peter Pindar and Antony Pasquin were master spirits in comparison. Other serials followed. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, by far the best of its class, mentions the Royal Academy Exhibition for the first time in 1809, and then but very briefly. Some years later it introduced a division for arts and sciences; but we find no art-notices, and science consists of such information as "a cheap way to raise asparagus," and "how to improve a stage-coach." About this time, 1817, *The Literary Gazette* was established, and a better style of criticism began, to which we may recur in our next volume. Sufficient has been done at present, in the few specimens quoted, to show that whatever progress English art had made—and the progress was indeed remarkable—had been made without sympathy on the part of the cognoscenti, patronage on the part of the

titled, or support and encouragement from critics and writers. Our artists however had made their place, had formed a British school, and won their rank. The Academy had trained a number of young painters who were soon to take the places of those passing away; and Lawrence, Turner, Wilkie, Mulready, Constable, Etty, Leslie, and many others, were ready to show by their works that academical training need not preclude perfect originality; while the British School of Water-Colour Painting, as yet in its infancy, was fast rising into importance, and to a worthy rivalry with the painters in oil.

The first half-century passed away with great promise. If the great painters with whom our school commenced left no actual successors and rivals in their particular branches, a host of men of great originality of aim, of new modes of thought, who were to cultivate fresh fields, were ready for the work, and the new century opened with at least as much promise as that which had heralded the commencement of the British school.

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